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Kitty and Her Kits

And
Other Stories
with
Many
Pictures.



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1885
by F. M. T. P.

London
Ernest Nister

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Kitty
and
Her
Kits



Kitty
and Her Kits.

ITTY and her kits are we—
Such a happy little three,
Full of mischief and of glee.

Yesterday an artist took
Portraits of us for a book,
You will see them if you look.

Then they wrote about us all,
Stories big and stories small,
Everything they could recall.

Next they put some pictures in:
If you'd see them, look within;
That is all, so now begin.

C. B.





Dear
Little
Kitty.

Kitty and Her Kits



A Volume of Stories
Illustrated by
Harriett M. Bennett;
Eddie J. Andrews,
Walter Paget,
Ada Dennis,
Etc.

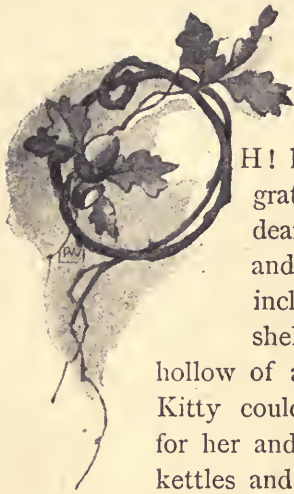


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Kitty and Her Kits.

H! kittens, do sit still," cried Kitty. "I'm sure you ought to be very grateful to me for bringing you out for a nice ride. Oh, dear! oh, dear! now it is beginning to rain too!" Kitty opened her umbrella and held it carefully over the "p'ram." As the shower seemed inclined to be a long one, she thought perhaps they had better seek shelter, so taking the kits one under each arm, she crept into the hollow of an old oak-tree. There it was beautifully warm and dry, and Kitty could not help thinking what a dear little house it would make for her and her kits. "I could knock nails into the walls to hang the kettles and things on," she said aloud.

"What?" cried a sharp little voice. "Knock nails into my beautiful tree! I never heard of such a thing." Kitty was startled, and even Pete and Pip seemed astonished. Looking up, Kitty was surprised to see a tiny little man, with a long white beard, standing on the threshold of a little door. He wore the prettiest, quaintest costume imaginable, for it was made entirely of oak-leaves, and on his head, in place of a hat, he had an acorn cup. "Well, Kitty," he said, when the child had gazed at him for a full minute without speaking, "what are you thinking about?"

Kitty, who was always a very truthful little girl, replied without hesitation, "I was thinking what a queer little man you were, and wondering what was behind that door. I never noticed it before, and I often come here to play."

"Would you like to come and see?"

The little lady's sparkling eyes said "Yes" so plainly that the elf did not wait for an answer, but offered her his hand. She took it, gave a little jump, and found herself inside the doorway. Both Kitty and her kits seemed to have grown smaller, for they were able to walk down the narrow passage along which the old man led them, without even stooping. Presently they came to the end, and found themselves in the most beautiful place they had ever seen. "It is just like Fairyland," cried Kitty.

"You are not far wrong, Miss Kitty," answered the elf. "This is Storyland, and I am the Story-maker." Kitty bowed politely, and the kits mewed.

"What do you call your kits," enquired the Story-maker kindly.

"Pete and Pip. Their real names are Peter and Piper, named after the man who picked the pickled peppercorns. Do you know that piece?"

"Know it? Why, I *made* it," replied the Story-maker.

"How clever you must be!" said Kitty.

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"Oh! it's very easy when you're used to it," he said. "You see, I've done nothing else all my life but make stories. I have a large box full of them—would you like to see some?"

"Yes, please," cried Kitty. So he opened the lid and let Kitty peep in. What fun it was to read stories brand-new from Storyland! They were so easy to read too, for there passed before Kitty's eyes rows and rows of pretty moving pictures, which told their own stories.

At length the Story-maker shut the lid of the box. "I think that is enough for one day, don't you?" he said. "And besides, it is time you went home to your dinner."

He took the little girl's hand and led her back through the passage until they came to the door. Then he bade her good-bye, and the next moment she found herself back in the hollow of the old tree, and heard the door shut with a click. So she fastened Pete and Pip into the "p'ram" and drove them home. The next morning Kitty came back to the oak, to pay another visit to the Story-maker, but somehow she could not find the little door. She searched and searched, but it was no use. She came again the day after, and the day after that, but never again did she see either the door in the hollow oak-tree or the little green elf. And now, little people, if you will turn the pages, you may read for yourselves some of the stories which the Story-maker showed Kitty and her kits, that day they went to Storyland. *L. L. Weedon.*





"**H**URRAH! it's snowing like fun," cried Jack, as he looked out of his bedroom window, one cold January morning. "Why, the snow must be a foot deep already. If it keeps on like this we can have a fine sham fight this afternoon."

The other children were as pleased as Jack to find the whole country covered with beautiful white snow. They begged hard for a holiday, but Mother said, "No, first comes work and then play;" so they were obliged to wait. However, the morning's lessons were soon over, and after dinner the whole of the schoolroom party were well wrapped up, and allowed to run out into the garden.

"Let me go too, Mother," pleaded Baby. "Oh, yes, Mother; do please let Babs come," cried all the children; "we'll take such care of him." So Babs was dressed in his little white coat and gaiters, and sent out with the rest. *What* fun they had, to be sure! First there was a grand fight. Frieda and Jack, being the two eldest, took different sides and chose their "men" in turns, and really both sides fought so well that it was difficult to tell which won. Baby enjoyed himself as much as anyone, and shouted and danced, got knocked down and picked himself up again, and altogether proved himself to be a first-rate soldier. When they were tired of fighting they built a snow man, and after that they thought they would play at bears.

"We'll build a den of snow," said Jack, "and some of us can be shipwrecked sailors, and the bears must come out and chase us." They soon made a splendid den, and Frieda, Dot, and Baby crept into it and pretended to be an old mother bear and

two little ones. They growled so fiercely and seemed so savage that some of the children were quite frightened. "Suppose there really *were* some bears hidden away under the snow," said Edith, "they might come out and eat us."

"Rubbish," Jack answered scornfully, "there are no bears in England. How silly you are, Ede! But come along now, it's time we went in to tea. Mother said we were not to stay out after dark." He and Frieda went in arm-and-arm, but Edith and Dot stayed behind for a little while to give a finishing touch to the snow man. Suddenly Edith clutched Dot's arm in terror. "Oh! look, look," she whispered, "there is something white moving at the end of the garden where we built the bears' den. Oh! Dot, Dot, suppose it is a little bear come to eat us?"



Dot didn't wait to suppose; but began to run towards the house, as fast as her legs could carry her, and Edith came helter-skelter after her. "Open the door, Mother, open the door. Quick, quick!" they cried; "there's a bear in the garden."

Mother came running to the door to see what they could possibly mean. "A bear, you foolish children? What nonsense!" she said. Then as they ran to hide behind her, she added, "Where's Baby?" The two children looked at each other in dismay. They had actually left dear little Baby all alone in the garden with the bear.

"Didn't he come in with Jack and Frieda?" faltered Dot.

"No," said Mother, "and you shouldn't have left him behind, dear little fellow, just because you were frightened at nothing at all, for you can't really be so silly as to think you saw a bear. He may have been frightened too."

Edith and Dot felt very much ashamed of themselves, and volunteered to go with Mother and look for Baby. Half way down the garden path they came upon a little white bear, trotting along as fast as his fat little legs would go. "Why, my pet," said Mother, "where have you been? Why didn't you come in with the others?"

"I only went back to the den to fetch my spade," said Babs. "I left it there when we were playing bears. I was crawling out again when Dot and Edith began to run away from me. I tried to catch them, but I couldn't run fast enough."

"Oh! children, children," laughed Mother, "so this is the fierce bear you were so much afraid of. Oh! what foolish little girls."

What fun everyone made of Edith and Dot, and how ashamed they felt of themselves! You may be sure they made up their minds never to be so silly again. But to this day, if anyone wants to tease them they have only to growl like a bear and say: "Who saw a little white bear in the garden, eh?"

- L. L. Weedon.



Gyp's Birthday. ✓

O-DAY is our Gyp's birthday;
He is only four years old,
But he's clever,
 good, and handsome,
And he's worth
 his weight in gold.

We want to show we love him,
But we're puzzled quite to say
What to give him on his birthday,
As a present for the day.

He has got a lovely kennel,
That has just been painted blue,
And a collar with his name on,
And a sack of biscuits too.

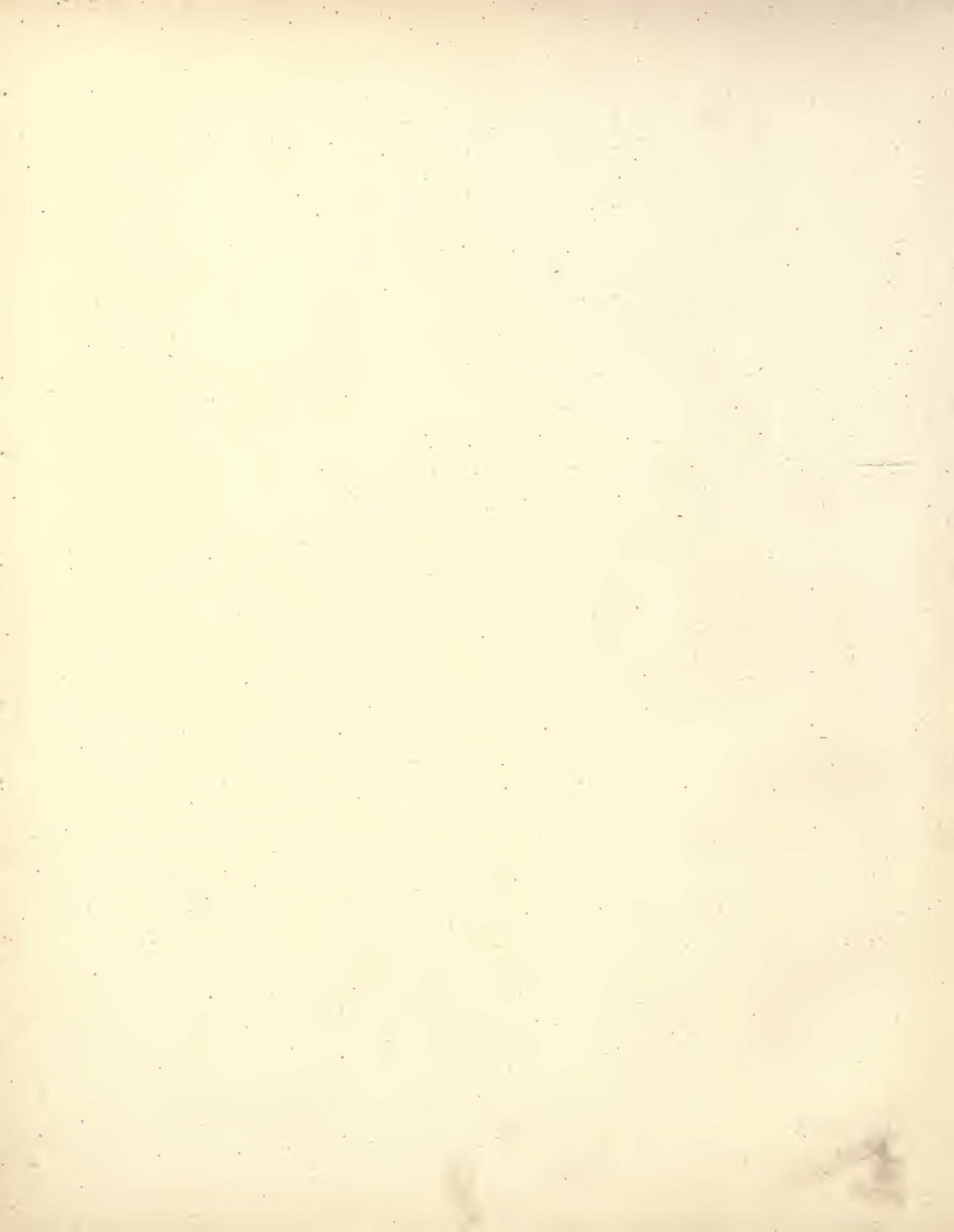
So he's going to have a party,
And we'll brush and comb his coat,
And we'll tie a pretty ribbon
Round his dear old shaggy throat.

Then we'll all have tea together,
And a merry game of play,
So he'll know that it's his birthday—
That he's four years old to-day!

C. B.

Doggie's Birthday.





Ragged Robin. ✓



HÉ was only a little crossing-sweeper who stood, with his broom, at the corner of a big London square; yet everybody noticed him, in his brown coat and red vest, and gave him a smile or a nod as they passed over his crossing.

They could not help it, they said, because Ragged Robin was always so kind and so good-natured—not only to the rich who gave him money for his services, but to the poor who had nothing to spare.

And a great many poor people passed by on their way to the hospital opposite. Most of them were tired-looking women, with sick children huddled up in their shawls, and all had sorrowful faces.

Sometimes Ragged Robin would take a little sick baby from its mother's arms, and carry it gently over his crossing, right up to the hospital doors.

Everybody in that great red-brick hospital knew Ragged Robin, for his mother had been an in-patient all last summer.

When she died, a kind neighbour bought him a broom, and let him lodge with her at night-time in Greenacre-court.

It was a strange name for a street where nothing green was to be seen, from end to end of it, and not the ghost of a flower. Yet the children did not notice this much, for they knew very little of the country.

Ragged Robin had been to Epping Forest once, a long time ago. He had a faint recollection of the big trees and the soft green carpet underneath, and of ferns growing higher than himself.

On Sundays he used to tell the children all about it when he wanted to keep them quiet, or on other days if a neighbour happened to be ill.

No one could manage the children as well as Robin, and they, on their side, loved him dearly. There was always a little crowd of them at the top of the court when he came home at night, and some would not go to bed until they had seen their dear Robin.

One evening a larger crowd than usual stood waiting to meet him, for something very wonderful indeed had happened, and everybody tried to speak at once.

"Oh! oh! oh!" they shouted, dancing and twirling about for joy. "Sister's been up our court—Sister from the Mission House—an' we're all going to the sea-side."

"Oh, crikey!" said Robin. "But it ain't true? It ain't never true!"

"Yes, it is," said Polly, his landlady's little daughter. "An' Sister's give us all tickets, an' she's left one with mother for you, Robin—you're to go too."

"Not to-morrer!" screamed a dozen little eager voices, "but the next day. Now, ain't that a jolly surprise!"

It was indeed a surprise!

If it had not been for the pink ticket that Polly's mother gave him when he went indoors, Ragged Robin would have thought it a dream. He had had those kind of dreams sometimes.

"Well, if it *is* true," he said to himself as he lay down that night on his poor truckle-bed, "if it is true, an' I has a good day to-morrer, I'll treat the little 'uns to swings an' roundabouts, an' no end of fine things at the sea-side."

And somehow he *did* have a good day, for the morning was showery and the crossing needed a good deal of sweeping.

The old lady at twenty-three was so pleased with his industry that she sent him a plate of soup and a lucky sixpence; the young lady from the corner-house asked him to fetch her a cab and gave him a threepenny-bit; then he had another threepenny-bit for minding a horse, and some odd pence besides, so that by twelve o'clock he had nearly two shillings.

"Won't us have a rare treat to-morrer!" he said. "Sister says the sea's bigger than our park, an' there's real fish in it, an' maybe some on us'll go riding in a boat, jest like Robinson Crusus."

At that moment a poor widow, with a little pale-faced boy at her side, came out of the hospital.

Robin threw down his broom, and ran to help her over



his crossing, for he knew her quite well.

"Why, it's Mrs. Jarvis!" he said; "an' you've been to fetch Jimmy out. Are yer better, Jimmy, old chap?"

"Yes, he's better," replied the poor woman sorrowfully, "but he doesn't want to go home."

"He looks white, don't he?" said Robin, looking down pitifully at Jimmy; "an' oh, my! ain't he light to carry!"

"Too light by half," sighed his mother. "Oh, dear, if he could only get a blow of the sea! Nurse said just now 'twould be the making of him."

"Poor little chap!" said Robin. "Come, cheer up, Jimmy: here's a penny for sweeties."

"Oh, thank'ee, my dear," said the widow. "You see, it's lonesome at home after the hospital, an' to-morrow I shall have to be out all day, but I must not stay. So, good-bye, Robin."

"That's just what they told mother when she came out," said Robin, as the widow passed round the corner of the square, "an' she couldn't get no blow of the sea. I wonder whether that's what made mother go an' die."

At this sad thought Robin brushed his tattered sleeve over his eyes. For the tears would come when he thought of his sweet, gentle mother.

Something in Jimmy's wistful face reminded him strangely of hers—it was so pale and patient.

"What a pity he couldn't go with them to-morrow!" he said. "But Sister told little Polly she had had to refuse lots of children, because there wasn't room enough left for a mouse."

Then Ragged Robin drew something from his pocket: it was the precious pink ticket, and as he looked at it he saw, in imagination, the blue sea and white-sailed



boats bobbing up and down upon it, and could almost feel the salt breezes blowing on his face.

"Get along!" he said angrily, talking to himself. "*You're* not a-going. Jimmy Jarvis 'll have to go—so I tell yer."

Then he shouldered his broom, and ran off round the corner as fast as ever he could after the poor woman.

"If I don't ketch Mrs. Jarvis up quick, I shall change my mind—I know I shall."

But he had not gone so very far before he saw her.

She was carrying little Jimmy in an uncomfortable fashion, for he was almost too big for her to manage, and the black widow's veil was streaming sadly behind her as she went along.

In a moment Ragged Robin was at her side, speaking very fast, and pushing something pink-coloured into her hand.

"There! that'll give Jimmy a blow of the sea! Lots of our folks are going; they'll take care on him!" And almost before Mrs. Jarvis knew what had happened Ragged Robin was out of sight.

"I'm glad I did it! I'm glad—I'm glad!" he kept repeating, as he tore along the street. "Sister won't mind. I shall tell her as I goes home this evening. Sister will understand."

All the rest of the day he worked hard at his crossing. The old lady at twenty-three wondered why he kept sweeping it over and over again when there was scarcely a speck of dust to be seen.

She did not know of Robin's sacrifice, and how he was trying to sweep away all thought of the sea, so that he might call at the Mission House with a bright, contented face.

So when his day's work was finished he flew round, and found the Sister packing hampers for the wonderful treat.

He drew his own particular Sister into a corner, and told what he had done. He was glad she did not make a fuss or say she was sorry. All she did was to bend down and kiss his eager little face. Nobody had kissed him like that but his mother.

Ragged Robin was right. Sister *did* understand, for, as she kissed him, she whispered, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

And there was no happier boy in Greenacre-court that night than Ragged Robin.

L. Haskell,



The Fairy Strike. ✓

*I*T was very difficult, much more difficult than Ella anticipated. She had gone forth with the nursery salt-cellar, in full expectation of catching quite a cageful of dicky-birds in a few minutes, and she had been a full hour by the Hall clock without capturing one.

At last she sat down on the steps quite exhausted, and Nicholas, the black cat, came and sat beside her.

It was a lovely morning, the sky so blue, the flowers so bright, the grass so green, and the birds hopping about everywhere.

It was vexatious she could not catch them!

She took up a pinch of salt again, and then, scarcely thinking of what she did, she put it just on the tip of Nicholas's tail, which lay stretched out behind him on the sun-warmed stone.

"Hallo!" he said, turning his head round, "what's the matter?"

"Oh!" cried Ella: "then it is some use. It makes you talk, if I can't catch the birds with it!"

"I beg your pardon," said Nicholas loftily; "I can always talk. It is you who seem deaf often, and don't understand me!"

"But the salt—"

"Oh, bother!" said Nicholas, yawning.

"That's rude!" replied Ella. "Mother says you oughtn't to say bother, and when you yawn you should put up your hand—paw I mean, and you've got such a big mouth!"

"The better to eat with, my dear!" squeaked Nicholas, smiling out of the corner of his eye.

"Why, that's what the Wolf says!" exclaimed Ella. "Do you know that story?"

"I've heard it often enough," said Nicholas. "Ah! we don't tell old things like that at our meetings and parties!"

"Do you have parties?" cried Ella excitedly. "Do tell me what you do."

"Well, we sing, for one thing. Should think you must have heard us! But those, of course, are at the entertainments. At the business meetings the fairies come, and we settle things about the plants and flowers and birds. Oh! there's a lot to be done—in the spring, especially. There was a grand fuss this year with the strike!"

"What strike?" asked Ella.

"The Oak Leaf Fairies it was began it. Don't you remember it was what you folks call a late spring, and you wiseacres said it was the East Winds, and the Gulf Stream, and all sorts of things? Gracious, how I used to laugh as I sat on the hearth-rug and heard you all talking! The weather! phew! It wasn't the weather at all. It was the great strike!"

"Oh! do tell me!" said Ella. "Did they hit somebody very hard, and were they hurt?"

"You goose!" replied Nicholas. "It wasn't hitting—it was they wouldn't work. You know how oak leaves are all cut in and out—well, the Oak Leaf Fairies said they didn't see why they should do so much more than the Lime-tree Leaf Fairies, for the lime-trees have just plain round sort of leaves, and then they said too, the acorns were such a bother to make them all fit exactly into their cups. Well, then the Lime-tree Leaf Fairies said the edges of their leaves were just as difficult to finish nicely as the big in-and-outs of the oak leaves—besides, they had to get them done much earlier."

"They said the Oak Leaf Fairies were lazy, and often didn't have their leaves ready till the end of May; and as to the acorns—they had to provide the scent for the Lime-tree blossom, not to speak of the little pink nightcaps the baby buds wear at first, while it is cold!"

"Oh! there was a grand old fuss, and at last the Fairy Stewards called a Great

Council together, and sent for the King and Queen, who had just gone for a trip round the Universe on a First-class Comet."

"And did you see them?" said Ella. "The King and Queen, I mean?"

"Oh! I've often seen them. Why, I'm Court Usher to the Queen. Of course, I attended her, and we had a grand assemblage under the pine-trees there, and the matter was soon settled.

"The King said everything was arranged quite fairly, and he wasn't going to have any nonsense, and if the Oak Leaf Fairies didn't behave themselves he would send the Wasp Fairies to see about it.

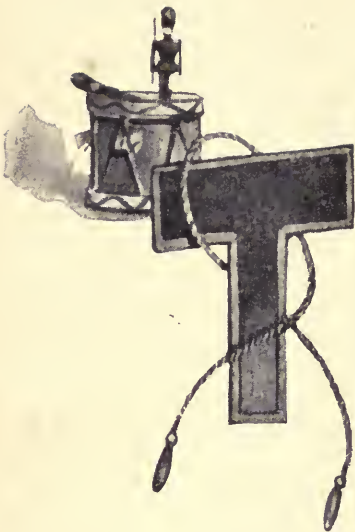
"But it made things late. Why"—and here Nicholas pricked up his ears—"there's the dinner-bell, I declare!"

Nicholas trotted off up the steps, and Ella started after him.

"Miss Ella, Miss Ella," called Nurse. "Come in, my dear, and have your hands washed. And you can bring any sparrows you have caught," she added, smiling down at her little charge.

M. A. Hoyer.





We and the Boys. ✓

O begin with, it was a wet day. And if there can be anything more really aggravating than the last day of the holidays being wet, I can only say that I am very glad I have never found it out yet.

And then, to go on with, and to make matters worse, it was not the last day of the boys' holidays, and so they did not look at it in the same way that we did. It was very aggravating, and we couldn't help feeling that it would have made no difference at all to the rain if it had come on the first day of lessons instead of on the last day of the holidays, while it did make all the difference to us.

Mother was called away for the day, and Mademoiselle was not coming until the evening, so we were left to ourselves in the schoolroom, and Sarah was to look after us. That was another thing; we objected to being "looked after" in the way that Sarah understood it.

Even Effie, who is lazy and easy-going, said she did not care to have Sarah open the door without any warning about once in every hour, crane her neck round it without troubling to walk in, look at us, and shut the door again.

"As if we were cows or geese, and she were herding us!" said Nora indignantly.

We were setting the schoolroom to rights. We had decided to make the best of the wet day by this time, and had begun to rather enjoy the idea of giving the schoolroom a thorough tidying, as Mother had advised us to do, before Mademoiselle should be obliged to fine us. It certainly had got into rather a mess, especially in that last week of the holidays, when we always have a way of getting reckless, and enjoying the present as hard as ever we can, as Effie said, in one of her moralising moods, without looking at the future.

So, what with Nora's seaweed-mounting, and Effie's doll's trousseau, and my scrapbook-making, to say nothing of all the boys' things (because if you once begin to mention their messes, you do not know where to stop), there really did not seem to be a corner to put anything down on, and there certainly was no chair left to sit on.

So Nora sat on the only few inches of the table where there was nothing else;

it gave her a free, independent kind of feeling that she knew she could not expect to have any more of before next holidays.

That end of the table was littered over with her sheets of seaweed, which she was fondly examining for the last time.

Effie was packing away her doll's bridal clothes in an old hat-box; they were spread out all over the floor, which did not seem a suitable sort of place for them, but it was owing to there being no room anywhere else, and she sat on her heels in the middle of them.

I was kneeling with half my body in one of the cupboards, with things piled before me, and behind me, and all round me, as if I were barricaded.

"And I wish you two would put your things away, and come to help with these cupboards," I said.

"I don't know how we ever are going to do the boys'," remarked Nora. "When the door is opened, everything comes pouring out."

"Well, if we don't begin, we shall not do any of them," I said. "And the fines will be dreadful."

"I'm coming in a minute," said Nora, "but my seaweed and Tom's stamps have got all mixed up together. We are such a *collecting* family, somehow, and collections do take up so much room. Effie might begin to help you; she has finished that box."

"We shan't have to do the lesson bookcase, anyway," said Effie comfortably, without moving. "Nobody has touched that since Mademoiselle went away, I do believe; but everything else—well!"

It was a "well!" that said volumes, and it was all that anybody would have felt able to say who had just glanced round our schoolroom then. "When I am grown-up," she went on, "I shall have a maid only to keep things tidy for me."

"I shan't," I said; "I rather enjoy tidying up, secretly, but the boys say it is faddish. That is, I enjoy tidying up my *own* things. I don't quite enjoy doing such a place as this has grown into lately. I don't care for cobbler's wax left amongst

my drawing-pencils when I let the boys use them, for instance. Nor for bottles of Spanish juice-water forgotten at the backs of shelves until they have gone mouldy. Nor for Tom's rushlight manufacture being a failure, and getting upset



all over everything else. Nor for my paints being left in a saucer of water when I lend them to Harry. And I think that when there is only one penknife in the school-room, and it belongs to everybody, that people ought to be prevented from cutting up toffee with it."

"The question is," said Nora, "should we lend our things to the boys or not?"

"I don't mind lending," I said, "but I wish they would return them in order."

"But they don't," said Effie. "Boys never do. And so it's safer not to let them have one's things."

"Well, now perhaps you two will come and help me," I said. "I keep getting more and more things out, and piling them on the floor, but they will have to be put back again, so we may as well begin."

For by this time, the barricade had got so high all round me that I could not move, and it seemed to be time for someone to come to my help.

And just at the very moment when Nora threw open the other cupboard door, and Effie swept a whole pile of rubbish into her pinafore from one of the bookshelves, there came a clattering and a stamping of strong boots up the stairs and down the passage.

"It's the *boys!*" said Nora, in a most horrified voice. "Now we never shall get the place tidy!"

"They must go away again," cried Effie; "we must drive them out."

"We can't, by force," I said.

"No; we can by disagreeableness."

"But stop!" cried Nora suddenly.

"Go away," said Effie, as the door opened; "you can just go away again, for we don't want you."

"Don't!" said Nora, in a quick whisper, with a bright colour coming up into her cheeks.

It had not made any difference, to be sure, and nothing that Effie could say was likely to do, as she was not a person whom the boys would have ever thought of minding in the least.

They came in with a rush and a bound, all on each other's backs, as it seemed to us.

"What's that?" cried Harry. "Smelling seaweed! Stick the mouldy old rubbish away!"

Nora's face grew redder still, and with vexation now, for she is very proud of her seaweed collection, and she has a quick temper too.

But to our great astonishment, she closed her lips together, and then she began to laugh, quite good-humouredly.



"I wish you would put your things away."

"Well, Harry," she said, "*you* need not say anything about the smell of my seaweed. Only wait till Mademoiselle smells that box at the back of your cupboard."

"Oh, that goldfish that died," said Harry. "To be sure—but I mean to stuff him soon; not to-day, I haven't time. But put all that rubbish away now. We want you to play—"

"Then we can't possibly," interrupted Effie. "We can't do anything to-day but tidy up the schoolroom."

"Well, that doesn't really matter," said Nora, in the quietest and most unexpected way. "What is it that you want?"

"Oh, Nora!" cried Effie.

"Why, you know—" I began.

"We want to have a good game of something," said Tom. "It's so horridly wet outside, and we can't read all day. It's the end of your holidays too, and you will be no good after to-day."

"Well, wait till we have put these things away, and then we'll see," said Nora.

"*Nora!*" cried both Effie and I desperately.

But Nora only frowned at us behind Tom's back, and began to huddle her seaweed away into the cupboard.

It was inside there that we argued it out, right inside, to whisper without being heard.

"It does seem as if we might, you know," she said. "It *is* our last day, and it *is* very wet for them, and boys *can't* read and amuse themselves all day as girls can."

"But, Nora, the fines!"

"I don't care," said Nora courageously; "I shouldn't care if I were fined *pounds* to-morrow. The very last time that we quarrelled with the boys, Mother said she wished we would try not to make them feel that they were not wanted in the house."

Neither Effie nor I could answer her any longer. Partly I was ashamed that it should have been hot-tempered Nora who should have remembered what Mother had said, and partly I was struggling to do as she was doing.

But it was not easy, not for any of us, for I like tidying-up, and Effie hates paying her pocket-money away in fines, and Nora is not fond of "knuckling under" to the boys, as they call it.

Effie piled the ragged books on the shelf very slowly, and as if she were going to cry. Nora rolled up Tom's big net (which he has been netting ever since he was a little boy, and which he has never finished, and I do not think ever will) and put it back in the cupboard, with the colour very bright in her cheeks, and her lips together, and a little defiant sort of smile on them as if she could make herself do it



and not care a bit. But I am sometimes so horrid, that I feel as if I *could* not make myself obey myself, and I should be ashamed to tell how long I stayed with my head in the dark behind the cupboard-door, before I could do it.

I hope it seemed as if I were only very slow over collecting some shells together, while I was struggling to do it nicely if I did it at all. I think it did, because Val took up a whole armful of my favourite things at last, and crammed them into the cupboard in a way that was agony to see, and called me a "pottering tortoise."

That was the worst of it, that the boys took it so coolly and so matter-of-coursely, as Nora said afterwards.

"Grin and bear it," is Tom's favourite motto, for he admires that way of doing nasty things extremely, but he did not know that we were "grinning and bearing" all that morning.

We began by playing at "Happy Families," but that was much too quiet, and we got on through bagatelle to "Dumb-band." Sarah looked in at the door in the middle of that, and asked us not to make so much noise, but Harry hooted her out of the room with such a fearful blast on his trombone that her voice could not be heard at all.

And from that we went to "Arctic explorations," and rushed about the room in sledges, which made a frightful noise, and did not improve the schoolroom chairs (only that I think they will endure anything), nor the table legs when it was necessary to imagine that they were icebergs. And then we went to a quiet game of drawing pigs with eyes closed until the dust had settled down.

It seemed to us as if we played at every game that had ever been invented, to say nothing at all of watching all Val's old conjuring tricks, that we knew as well as possible, and being members while Tom made a Parliamentary speech. And the subject of the speech was "The Faddishness of Girls," which we felt to be a little hard, considering.

I am not sure that we could have gone on bearing it, and, indeed, Effie was giving signs of being about to stand up and reply, when fortunately Sarah looked in again, and the dinner-bell rang.

We did hope—and I hope now that it is not unkind to say so—but we did *hope* that it would be fine after dinner, so that the boys would go out and leave us. But of course it was not to be; it rained more steadily than ever, if possible, and they stayed with us in the most faithful manner.

And they were so cheerful over it too!—the only comfort we had was the pleasure of thinking that we had made their cheerfulness. Tom actually offered in the most condescending way to act a play for us with his toy-theatre, a thing that we generally have to coax out of him.

So we helped to arrange tablecloths over clothes-horses (with the coverlet off Tom's bed, which he sent Effie to fetch, and me to put away), to hide all the man-agement of the theatre, and we sat and applauded all the afternoon, and even helped to swell the shouts of the mobs and the armies in the exciting scenes, which audiences are not expected to do in real theatres, but Tom said that Val and Harry, behind the tablecloths, did not make noise enough.

But it came to a quicker ending than the play intended, because Sarah looked in



and screamed as Tom was lighting up the red fire for the storm scene, and she insisted on putting a stop to it, and would not listen to our declarations that he was allowed to do it.

And of course we had to clear most of the things away, and as it was dusk by that time, the boys took a sudden fancy for playing at French blindman's buff, with shadows on the wall.

And to end up with, when Mother and Mademoiselle came into the schoolroom together, at last, if we weren't playing "Robin's Alive" still with those boys.

And it was only what anyone would expect that they should rush away to wash for tea, and leave us to put everything to rights.

Mademoiselle gave a low shriek when she saw the room. We do not wonder at it. Nora could only make the best of it, which she did very well, I think, considering that she had been the victim to be holding the lighted chip and saying, "If he dies in my hand, my back shall be saddled," &c.—when he did die in her hand, and so she was at that moment lying on her face in the middle of the floor, "saddled" with two chairs over her back, the wastepaper basket, a drawing-board, the fire-irons, an atlas, and an antimacassar.

She crawled out from under the chairs, and took the antimacassar off her head with one hand, while she took Mademoiselle's hand with the other.

"We are sorry that you will find the schoolroom cupboards in a great mess," she said, thinking that, since we had to be punished, we might as well have the first word. "We were intending to tidy them up to-day, but it rained, so the boys stayed in, and we could not do them. This is not *excusing*, Mademoiselle, please; it is *explaining*."

And in our family we do like to be loyal to each other, and so Effie and I did not say a word of excusing either, and no more explaining was necessary when Mademoiselle glanced round.

Only Effie could not really help saying—

“But being the end of the holidays, Mademoiselle, we are wondering if the fines might be half-price?”

Mademoiselle said, “By no means!” in the briskest manner, and I thought it was allowable to give one little bit more explanation. So I said—

“But it isn’t anything of ours that smells so disagreeably at the back of the long cupboard; it is Harry’s goldfish that died, and that he thinks of stuffing for his museum soon, and he will be glad if you will kindly not mind it, Mademoiselle.”

But afterwards, when we got Mother all to ourselves for a few minutes, we explained a little more.

“It’s hard about the fines,” Effie lowered herself to say. “It isn’t any use tidying up till the last day, Mother, because the boys *will* go untidying again.”

“But I do not see that I can interfere with Mademoiselle’s proper rules,” Mother was beginning, but Nora broke in, frowning very snubbingly at Effie—

“We don’t want to be excused, Mother. We ought to have done the tidying sooner or *somehow*, so we expect to be fined, but yet we can’t feel very sorry. I think the girls always have to pay in some way for the boys. But the girls don’t *mind*, after all. And we only told you, Mother, because we wanted you to understand when Mademoiselle says that we have been fined.”

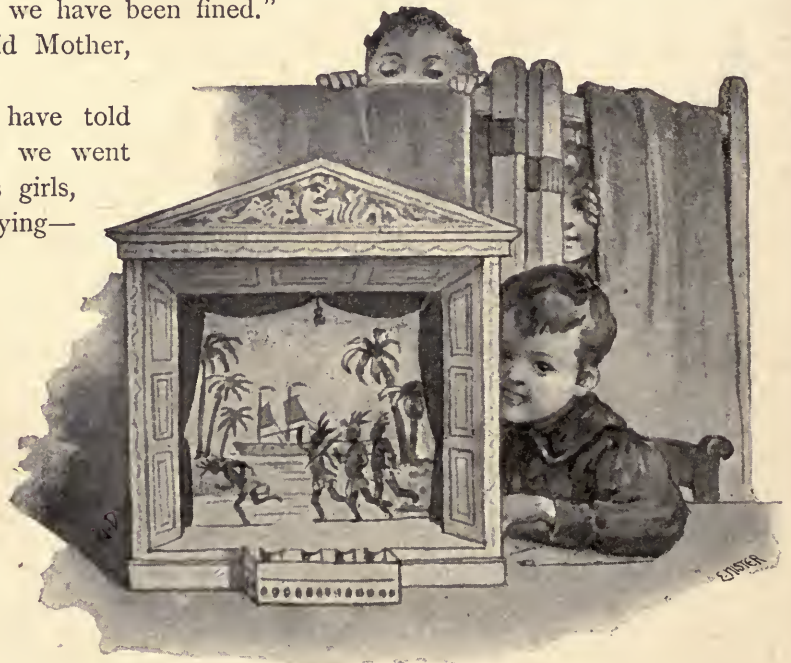
“I shall understand,” said Mother, and smiled at us.

But I think she must have told the boys after tea, for when we went up to bed, Nora said to us girls, half laughing and half crying—

“Tom says he is going to pay those fines, and oh! I am so very glad we did it, for he called us bricks!”

And we could not help thinking that Mother was somehow pleased with us, in spite of the fines, from the way in which she kissed us good-night.

Frances E. Crompton.





Arethusa Smith. ✓

HAT is Polly's real name, Mr. Smith?"

"Arethusa, Missy."

"It's rather a funny name for a little girl, isn't it? How did you and Mrs. Smith come to think of such a name?"

"Well, you see, it was like this—" began the old man, when he was interrupted by a shout from one of the boys—

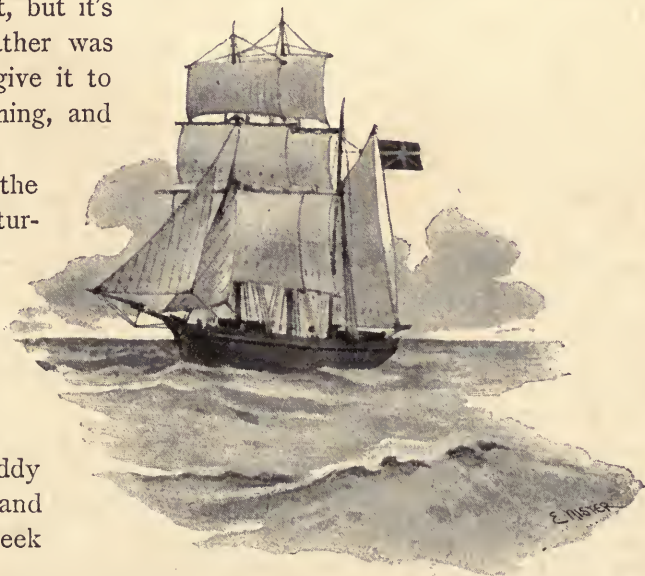
"There's the steamer just coming round the point, and if we're not quick we shall be too late to meet Father."

There was a general stampede and the children began to climb down the steep wooden steps which led to the pier. They made quite a formidable party, for Winnie and Ella May were staying with their cousins for the summer holidays, and besides, they had all taken a wonderful fancy to little Polly Smith, and took her about with them wherever they went. They reached the steamer just in time, and Father was nearly upset by the crowd of little people who rushed at him. "Dear, dear!" he said, "what a party you are to be sure, and who is this little woman?"

"That's Arry—Arry—Polly Smith," said Rose, giving up the long name in despair. "I can't remember the whole of it, but it's a *very* queer name, and Polly's father was going to tell us how they came to give it to her when we saw the steamer coming, and had to rush to meet you."

The Fairhursts were spending the holidays at Beechcroft and every Saturday Father came down from town to stay until Monday morning.

The children generally had some piece of news with which to greet him. Last week it had been about Johnnie's wonderful donkey ride, when the long-suffering Neddy had actually run away with him, and pitched him into a pool; the week



before they had been interested in the aquarium they were making; and this week Polly, or, to give her her proper title, Arethusa Smith, was the topic of conversation.

Father listened to all they had to say, and when at length they paused for breath, he suggested that they should go back to their friend the old boatman, and hear the history of Polly's queer name, whilst he went home to Mother. So away they scampered, and found Joe Smith still mending his nets, and quite ready to tell them a story.

"Well, as you said, missy," he began, "*Arethusa* is a queer name for a little girl. But we called her after a ship of that name. Until a year or two back, I was a sailor, and the very last voyage I ever sailed was on board the good ship *Arethusa*. We were to be gone a long time—pretty near two years, in fact—and I expected to come home with a pocket full of money and settle down ashore for the rest of my life—just the same as I have done, you see, though the voyage turned out very differently to what I had expected.

"From the very first the weather was against us, and we were so beaten and battered about that we were constantly obliged to put into ports we had never intended to touch at, for the vessel to be repaired. However, at length, in spite of the weather, we reached our destination, and a week or two later were homeward bound. But we were as unlucky on the home voyage as we were going out, more so in fact, for in rounding the Horn a squall struck us and drove us on to a rock.

"It was all up with the poor old *Arethusa*. The Captain ordered the boats out, but several were swamped, and amongst them the one into which I had been ordered. Ah, it was a terrible time! I couldn't rightly tell you what did happen, but I remember making a clutch at one of the bairns in the boat, and then followed a wild struggle with the boiling waves, and at length, more dead than alive, I was flung ashore, with the little one still in my arms. The babe and I were the only two of that boat's crew who ever came ashore alive, and, though our Captain afterwards made every possible inquiry, no one ever appeared to claim the little maid I had saved.

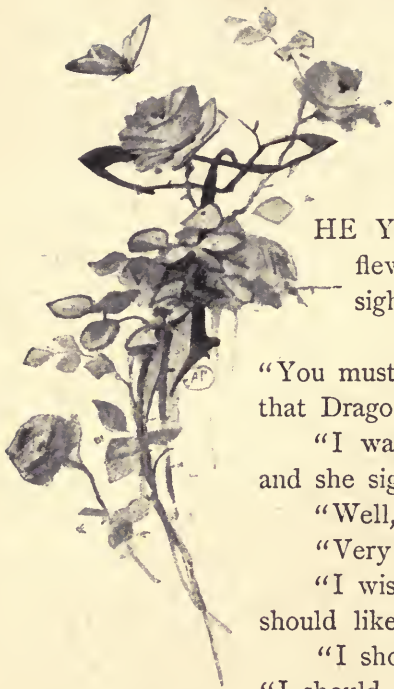
"And so I begged that I might have her, for somehow she seemed to belong to me. When we reached home I brought the little creature down here to my missus, well knowing what a tender heart she had for the little ones, and that she wouldn't refuse to take the little waif in. And she's been like a mother to her since, and as for me, I couldn't love her more if she was my own little girl.

"Now, we couldn't think what to call her, for she was but six months old at the time of the shipwreck, and her poor mother had always called her Baby; so my wife and I, we gave her the name of *Arethusa*, in memory of the old ship, but, being as how it's a longish name for such a wee toddler, we just call her 'Polly' for short."

L. L. Weedon.



Down by the Sea.



The Discontented Butterfly. ✓

HE Yellow Butterfly watched the handsome stranger as he flew up and down the garden, and the Yellow Butterfly sighed.

"Now then, what is the matter?" said the Pink Rose. "You must not sigh like that near me—I don't like it. Look at that Dragon-fly—he doesn't sigh!"

"I was looking at the Dragon-fly," said the Yellow Butterfly, and she sighed again.

"Well, he's a handsome Dragon-fly," said the Pink Rose.

"Very handsome," said a Tiger-lily.

"I wish he would settle near me," whispered a Daisy. "I should like to speak to him."

"I should like to speak to him, too," said the Yellow Butterfly.

"I should like to ask him——"

"There he goes," said the Pink Rose. "He's off to the river, I expect."

"And now I shall never be able to ask him," sighed the Yellow Butterfly.

"Look here," said the Pink Rose, "I can't stand this. You can do one of two things. Either tell me what is the matter, or take yourself off."

"Quite right," said the Tiger-lily.

"It is a beautiful day," said the Rose.

"There's a shower coming," said the Yellow Butterfly.

"And this is a beautiful garden," said the Rose. "You ought to be a very happy butterfly, and there you are, sighing away like a——"

"Young breeze," said the Tiger-lily.

"I was happy," said the Butterfly, "until I saw the stranger's beautiful wings. If only I had wings as bright as his!"

"Well," said the Rose, in a tone of great disgust.

"Such nonsense," said the Tiger-lily. "Now, if you wanted white wings."

"I wouldn't mind if my wings were blue, or red, or white," said the Butterfly.

But the Pink Rose had turned away, and the Tiger-lily was staring at the clouds, which were gathering up overhead.

"There will be a shower," said the Rose.

"Perhaps a rainbow," said the Ladybird. "I like rainbows."

"So do I," said the Pink Rose, shaking herself, "but I hate grumblers."

The Yellow Butterfly fell to the ground, still sighing. She dropped on to one of the Daisy's leaves.

"Butterfly," said the Daisy, "I can tell you something which might help you."

"You," said the Butterfly scornfully; "you are even uglier than I am; for you have no colours."

But the Daisy was not offended.

"My great-grandmother," she said, "once knew a very old and very wise fairy."

"I don't see what that has to do with me," said the Butterfly rudely.

"And the fairy told her," said the Daisy, "that all the beautiful colours were in the rainbow."

"Really?" said the Butterfly, very much interested. "May I come a little closer to you?—the rain has come."

"Get under the Sunflower leaf," said the Daisy. "I like the rain."

"Go on about the fairy," said the Butterfly, as the rain pattered down in big drops.

"And the old fairy said, at the end of the rainbow, where it touches the ground, every flower and every insect and every plant has as many and as beautiful colours as the rainbow itself."

"Then I must find the end of the rainbow," said the Butterfly.

"The shower is over," said the Rose, "a most refreshing shower."

"And a beautiful rainbow," said the Ladybird.

The Butterfly was up and away in a moment.

"Silly thing," said the Rose; "why can't she be content?"

But the Butterfly was out of the garden, flying towards the rainbow as fast as her wings could carry her.

"The end of the rainbow," she said as she flew, "the end of the rainbow! How beautiful I shall look when I have dipped my wings in the end of the rainbow. Then the handsome stranger will speak to me."

But somehow the farther she flew, she never seemed to get any nearer to the rainbow, which gradually grew fainter and at last faded away.

"Can you tell me the way to the end of the rainbow?" she enquired of the gardener's little girl, who came tripping along with a basket on her arm. But the little maid only smiled. It was clear she did not understand, so the Butterfly flitted away without even waiting to say "good-bye."

At last, quite tired out, it dropped on to a flower to rest. The flower grew near

a stream, and on the bank of the stream sat a big boy and a little boy talking together.

The Butterfly could hear them chatter, but she did not listen until she heard the little boy say—

“At the end of the rainbow, you know.”

The big boy smiled, but the Butterfly flew nearer to them, and listened.

“Yes,” said the little boy, “it would be grand if we could find the pot of gold buried in the ground, at the end of the rainbow.”

The big boy laughed.

“Well, it is time we made a move,” he said; “there is another shower coming. Let us go to look for the end of the rainbow.”

The boys jumped up, and began to walk quickly, and the Butterfly followed them eagerly.

“If they find it, I will find it too,” she said.

“Look at that butterfly!” said the little boy.

The Butterfly flew higher into the air.

“It’s a common Cabbage,” said the big boy, “and it’s so dirty, it’s not worth catching.”

The rain began to patter, and the boys to run.

Presently, at the corner of a road, they parted.

“If I find the gold I’ll let you know,” said the little boy.

“All right,” said the big one, “at the end of the rainbow.”

But there was no rainbow.

The Butterfly waited until the shower had passed, then she began to look about her.

She had travelled a long way, yet she seemed to be in a place she knew.

There was the green gate, and on the other side of the wall was the big garden. The boys had led her back to the spot from which she had started.

Should she go back into the garden? She hesitated for some time, then she flew over the wall and across the garden to the Daisy.

“Back again!” laughed the Pink Rose scornfully.

“Back again!” shouted the Tiger-lily.

The Butterfly was glad to hide under a big leaf beside the Daisy.

“I’m sorry,” said the Daisy, when she heard the Butterfly’s story, “I’m sorry you did not get to the end of the rainbow. If the wise fairy is still alive—but do you still want to change your wings?”

“No,” said the Butterfly; “but if ever I find the end of the rainbow——”

“There’s another rainbow!” said the Ladybird.

Where
Did You
Come From?



"Good-bye," said the Butterfly, and away she flew again.

She had not left the garden more than a minute when the handsome Dragon-fly flew up to the Daisy.

"Good afternoon," he said.

The Daisy's leaves grew quite pink at the tips with pleasure.

"Have you seen a Yellow Butterfly?" said the stranger. "I noticed one this morning in this garden."

The Rose and the Tiger-lily began to laugh.

"The Butterfly wished to have white wings," said the Rose; "the discontented thing!"

"And she's gone to find the end of the rainbow," said the Tiger-lily.

"She's spoilt her pretty yellow wings," said the Ladybird; "they are dirty and draggled."

"What a pity!" said the Dragon-fly; "and I was thinking how beautiful they were! What a pity!"

"If she only knew," said the Daisy, as the stranger flew away; "but perhaps she will never know."

Maggie Browne.



How Kitty Lost Her Shoe. ✓

"*I*'M going to-morrow morning to Witley Copse," said Kitty, "to get some violets for Grannie. It's her birthday, and when I was reading to her the other day, there was something about violets, and she told me how, when she was a little girl, she always had some from Witley Copse on her birthday, and they were the sweetest and finest she ever saw. So I'm going to get up early, and go before breakfast to get them."

"Nurse won't let you," answered Tom, who was sitting on the low wall watching Kitty sow mustard and cress. The children were next-door neighbours, and, neither of them having any brothers or sisters, were much together. Tom was especially fond of sitting on the wall and conversing, while Kitty attended to her garden. He didn't care about gardening himself: he said it made his back ache.

"Nurse is away. Her mother is ill, but I can dress myself," said Kitty proudly. "I'm not a baby."

"Well, I don't think I'd go to Witley Copse," replied Tom, whose bright dark eyes began to glitter with some amusing idea which just then occurred to him, "for I believe that something dreadful lives there—a dragon or a bogey."

"There aren't such things," cried Kitty, though she grew a little pale at the thought.

"They are all dead."

"Oh, are they?" Tom shook his head solemnly. "It might be an old, old one, or those things Father calls survivals. Father says old Mr. Jones down in the village is a survival, so perhaps a dragon might be, too. And I heard a dreadful



growling in a hole behind the willows the other day where we get the palm, and I looked in and there were two fiery eyes, like Antonio's in the dark." Antonio was the black cat. "But good-bye; there's the luncheon-bell," and Tom jumped off the wall. "Only take care, because dragons eat people," he cried, as he ran indoors.

Kitty was rather disturbed by Tom's words, for she was a nervous, fanciful child, with a sort of odd half-belief in fairies and goblins and dragons and enchanters, but still she was so anxious for those violets that she held to her plan. She managed to dress herself next morning, with a little finishing help from Mary, the housemaid, whom she found sweeping the stairs, and requested to fasten her frock.

"Going into the garden to play, Miss Kitty?" said Mary. "Well, don't go on the grass, dearie, for the dew is very heavy."

Kitty got her basket, and ran down the garden to a little gate which admitted into the lane leading to Witley Copse. It was not very far to the entrance of the Copse, into which you turned just after passing the cottage where the pretty Miss Amorys lived. Kitty was soon running along the little path winding between the great hazel-bushes and low oak-trees which formed the wood. It was a lovely April morning, and the undergrowth was all bursting into tiny leaf, and the birds singing as if they were mad with joy.

And then came a waft of perfume, which made Kitty lift up her delicate little nose and sniff delightedly, and there on a bank just before her was a perfect bed of violets.

Kitty rushed at them. She had quite forgotten Tom's words about dragons till, as, she was picking away at the violets, all at once she heard a mysterious noise, a sort of growling, which recalled what he had said. She listened a moment, but then it was quiet, so she went on gathering her flowers, though her little heart beat rather faster than usual, when suddenly it came again—really quite close to her—an awful deep growl, something like the animals at the Zoo, where she had been once. She started



up and looked round her in terror, while the noise grew louder, coming from behind the willows, where Tom had said the dragon, or the other awful creature with the long name she didn't understand, had its den. Yes, and there was something rustling, and oh, oh! a dreadful dark thing wriggling towards her through the underwood.

With a shriek of terror, Kitty turned and fled along the wood, tripping over low branches, stumbling over stumps, tearing and scratching herself among brambles, but regardless of everything in her panic, save to get out of the wood, and escape the awful creature which she was sure was following her—blind and deaf in her terror even to a voice that was shouting—

"Kitty—stop, Kitty! It's only me. Stop! you've dropped your shoe."

But Kitty neither heard nor saw anything till she got to Miss Amory's cottage, and began drumming on the door with her little trembling hands, too bewildered even to find the bell. May Amory was passing across the passage and hearing the sound, opened the door, when Kitty rushed in and caught her skirt, gasping out some incoherent words.

"Why, Kitty," exclaimed May, kneeling down and catching the child in her arms, "whatever is the matter, darling? what has frightened you?"

"The dragon," panted Kitty. "Oh, shut the door or he'll come in! Oh, I went—to get—some violets for Grannie—and he began to—growl."

"Whatever does she mean?" cried Lily and Fan, who had come to see what was happening. "And see, she has lost her shoe." It had come off in her flight, and her sock was all wet with dew and stained with dust, and her poor little foot pricked and bruised with thorns and stones.



"Tom says—he lives there—and he's a sur—sur—something," went on Kitty, whom May had got now on her knee in the pretty parlour, where they were just going to breakfast.

"Tom talks nonsense, dear," said May. "He was just teasing you."

"Oh, but—but I saw him," cried Kitty, "and oh—oh—he's coming," she screamed as the garden gate clicked. "Oh, can't you hear?" and she flung her arms round May and clung trembling to her.

There was certainly somebody coming up the garden path, but it was not a dragon nor a survival. It was only a small boy who, under a demure air, was trying to hide the fact that he was shaking with laughter. He looked in at the open window of the parlour, and then took off his hat politely, and held out a small shoe.

"Please," he said, "is Kitty Trevor here? because she has dropped her shoe."

Lily was outside in a moment, and had seized him by the collar of his smock.

"Tom," she said, "you monkey! What do you mean by frightening poor little Kitty with all that nonsense about dragons?"

Tom hung his head contritely, though he still could hardly repress his giggles. "I didn't think she'd be so silly as to believe it," he mumbled.

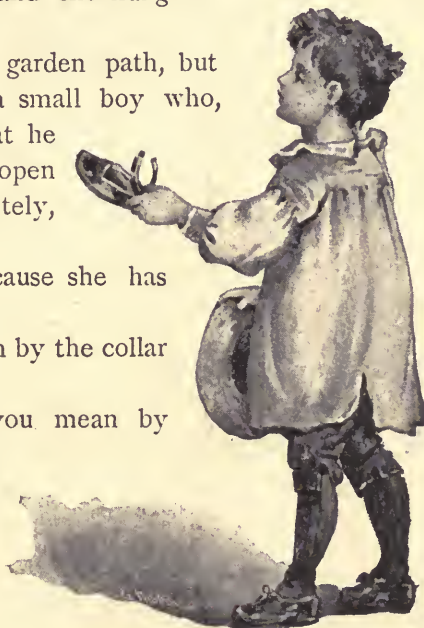
"But you went and hid in the woods, and growled on purpose to frighten her. You know you did. You deserve to be whipped," went on Lily indignantly, giving him an involuntary shake in her anger. "And her poor little foot is quite bruised with running without her shoe, and she's lost all her violets, and is crying now because there are none left to give to her Grannie. Oh, Tom, I didn't think you would be such a coward."

Tom grew very red, and didn't laugh any more.

"I'm not a coward," he said, angrily twisting himself out of Lily's grasp.

"Yes, you are," she retorted. "Every boy is a coward who teases and torments anybody smaller and weaker than himself. Kitty is a year younger than you, and a girl too. If you had been a gentleman you would have helped to get the violets, and not frightened her into fits when she went by herself alone, poor little soul."

Tom stared at Lily angrily for a minute, and then dashed away, flinging the shoe at her feet. Lily picked it up and went in. Kitty was much comforted now, and was sitting on May's knee, drinking some milk, though still mourning over her lost violets.



"I'll put on my hat and take her home," said Lily. "They will be wondering what has become of her."

So Kitty's shoe was put on, and she and Lily went up the lane together, but just as they reached the garden gate, something came rushing up behind them, in a manner which made Kitty start and tremble. But it was only Tom, with a great bunch of violets which he stuffed into Kitty's hands.

"I'm very sorry I frightened you," he muttered. "I only did it for fun, and I thought you'd guess it was me. And please take these violets for those you lost."

Then he turned to Lily.

"Am I a gentleman now, Miss Lily?" he said, looking half defiantly at her.

"I hope you are beginning to be one," she answered, nodding at him with a smile.



The Little Girl Over the Way. ✓

OTHER, I do believe the little girl over the way is ill."

"Why, dearie?"

"Well, I haven't seen her going out with her nurse for a long time, and Sarah says Dr. Haslemere's carriage stops there every day, and it isn't old Mrs. Courtenay who is ill, because she has just gone out."

"Dear me, what a gossip my little girl is," said Mother, smiling. She crossed the room, and, putting her arm round Gertie's shoulders, stood looking out of the window at the house on the opposite side of the way.

"Oh! Mother," cried Gertie suddenly, "here she is. Oh! poor little girl!"

Mother looked up, and saw, at an upper window, the most woebegone little figure imaginable. A tiny little child, with cheeks as white as the nightgown she wore, stood pressing her face close to the window panes, and gazing at Gertie and her Mother with wistful eyes. Poor little lonely girl! the sight of the kind face opposite made her long for her own dear Mother, and the tears welled up into the big blue eyes and ran trickling down the thin cheeks.

"Miss Madge, you *naughty* child," cried an angry voice, "go back to bed at once. Why, you'll catch your death of cold. Whatever will your Aunt say when I tell her you've been standing at that window for goodness knows how long, in nothing but your nightgown too?"



"I was so dull," sobbed Madge, as old Martha covered her up in bed. "I just got out to see if the little girl opposite might be looking out, and she was at the window and nodded and smiled at me. I wish she would come over and play with me—she looks such a nice little girl."

"Well, it's no good wishing, Miss Madge, for your Aunt don't know her Ma, so she can't ask her over. But come, don't cry, there's a good child, and you shall have some sponge biscuits for your tea."

Madge was *very* fond of sponge biscuits, but she was feeling so miserable that even the promise of the unaccustomed luxury failed to comfort her, and she was still crying when the door opened and Dr. Haslemere came in to pay his daily visit.

"How's my little patient to-day?" he began, and then, "Why, Madgie, in tears—what's the matter?"

"I'm so lonely," said poor little Madge. "I want Mother dreadfully. In India

there were lots of little children to play with, but there isn't anyone here. There's a nice little girl lives opposite, and I got out of bed to watch for her; but Martha says it's naughty, and that I shall catch my death of cold."

"Poor little woman," said the doctor kindly. "And so you haven't anyone to play with, eh? Why can't the nice little girl come over?"

"Martha says that Aunt Dorcas doesn't know her Mamma."

Dr. Haslemere paid quite a long visit that day, for he had taken a great fancy to little Madge Cunliffe. He told her such funny stories that soon the tears were dried and she was laughing merrily. At last he produced a box of chocolates from his pocket, and at the same time rose to go. "Not too many sweeties at a time, remember," he said, "and above all things, *no more tears.*"

Madge's face had already begun to lengthen, but she tried hard to smile, just to please the kind doctor.

"Good-bye," he said, waving his hand. "And don't be surprised if something wonderful happens. I'm a magician, you know, and now I am going to weave my spells."

For a long time Madge lay wondering what could be going to happen, and thinking made her drowsy and she fell asleep. She dreamt a very strange dream. It seemed to her that Aunt Dorcas was bending over her and kissing her. "Dr. Haslemere says she's fretting her heart out, and has persuaded me to go over the way and ask Mrs. Hardy to let her little girl come and play with her," the old lady said to Martha.

When Madge began to wake up again, she remembered her dream.

"Oh! dear, I wish it were true," she said sleepily. When her eyes were quite wide open, how surprised she was, for—the dream *had* come true, and there sat the little girl from over the way.

"I've come to tea with you," she said a little shyly. "Your Aunt came and told my Mother you were dull all by yourself, and that the doctor had said you would never get well till you were roused; so I've come and I hope you will like me."

"Oh! I *shall*—I'm sure I shall," said Madge, her blue eyes dancing with pleasure. "How kind of Dr. Haslemere, and how kind of you to come! I am glad now that Martha promised me sponge biscuits for tea; I hope you like them."

Gertie did, and very much the two children enjoyed their tea-party. Aunt Dorcas told Gertie when she went home, that she must be a little fairy, for Madge looked better already, and at the end of a week Dr. Haslemere said he might as well hand over his patient to Dr. Gertie, for it was evident *he* wasn't wanted any longer.

"Yes, you are," said Madge, giving him a good hug. "I like you as much as ever—more even, for if it hadn't been for you I should never have got to know the little girl over the way—and she *is* a nice little girl, much nicer than the children in India; and I'm never going to be lonely any more."

L. L. Weedon.

The Sandman. ✓



"*W*ILL you get out of my way, lumbering elf; this is the third night I have tumbled over you."

"Softly, good Father Sandman, softly! If you were not so blind you would have seen me. Have you put all your children to bed, old Father Sandman?"

"Go along for a teasing, impertinent imp!"

Pipistrello laughed shrilly as he swung himself to and fro on the branch of a low shrub, chanting, "Close, little eyelids, close up tight, for the Sandman's come to town!"

The old fellow had gone into his cave; it was nearly dark now.

Boum! An old brown shoe came flying out, and, catching the elf as he swung, toppled him neatly on to the grass beneath. He was not hurt, for the Sandman goes very softly shod, that the children may not hear him.

But he was extremely angry! "Very good!" he cried, shaking his morsel of a fist, "to-day you, Father Sandman, and to-morrow me! Mark my words, you will be sorry for it before the moon is many nights older."

A chuckle was heard coming from the cave, and that was all. Pip went off, meditating revenge. In the middle of supper he snapped his fingers gleefully. "The very thing," he cried, helping himself to another fried beetle's wing; and he began to hum: "Close, little eyelids, close up tight, for the Sandman's come to town!"

Old Father Sandman was hunting about his cave in a fine state of mind.

"Ach, where is my bag of sand? Where can it have gone? It is the children's bedtime; the Nurses and the Mammias will be wondering where I am! My sand-bag, my precious sand-bag—oh, if I could but find it!"

The poor old gentleman trotted to and fro, and seemed nearly distracted.

"I wish I could help you," said a bat, who generally shared his cave; "I have been asleep all day, you know, and have seen no one."

"If you will let me ride on your back," cried the old fellow eagerly, "I might catch my brother Sandman, who lives the other side of the wood, before he goes out. He would lend me some sand, perhaps."

"Come along then," said the bat.

But the second Sandman declined to help.

"Very sorry," he remarked, "but I have only just enough dust for my own children. There is one wakeful little boy who takes half a peck all to himself. The trouble I have with that urchin! Then there is a little girl who—" but his visitor did not stay to listen.

Poor Father Sandman got back to his cave, and there was Pip swinging on the same branch as before, and looking very malicious.

"I believe," gasped the old gentleman, "that it is you that stole my sack!"

Pip laughed, and skipped out of reach, crying—

"My turn to-day, Father Sandman."

But although mischievous, he was not a bad-hearted sprite, and presently he went and fetched the sand-bag. Then he made a bargain. "Father Sandman, will you say you are sorry?"

"Pipistrello, I will say I am sorry," was the reply.

"And you won't bear malice?"

"I will not bear malice—give me my bag."

"One thing more. Will you let all the children sit up half an hour longer in winter, and an hour in summer?"

"It can't be done—well, perhaps if I must—yes, then; but the babies must go to bed a quarter of an hour earlier all the year round."

"Please yourself about the babies," said Pip. "Catch, Father Sandman!"

The next minute the old fellow, with his sack on his back, and a smile on his face, was trotting off to the town.

Sheila.





A Voyage of Discovery.✓

HORACE and Lena lived in a town, and they had only a small garden to play in, a straight strip of grass with a gravel walk all round it and flower-beds round the gravel walk, and a red brick wall on each side shutting off the next-door gardens. There was only room for trap and ball in the summer and for hoops and skipping-ropes in the winter. But one day Mr. Hall, their Father, told them he had bought a new home quite in the country, and when it was ready he sent for the children to come with their Nurse.

First they went in a train nearly all day, till it was long after tea-time, and when they got out of the train they had to drive ten miles on the top of a coach drawn by four horses. They had to climb up a step-ladder to get to their seats, and Horace and Lena sat just behind the coachman, who wore a red coat and a shiny white hat, and cracked a long, long whip. The horses trotted up and down hill, and the coachman threw newspapers and parcels into the gardens of houses as he passed, and when they stopped in a little town on the side of a very steep hill to take up some more passengers, he just got down and threw the reins down, and no one stood by the horses or held their heads; and Lena was afraid they would run away, but Horace tried to look very brave, though he held Nurse's hand *tight* till the coachman came back.

At last when Lena was nearly asleep the coach stopped, and the ladder was put for them to get down, and their boxes were taken down also. In front of them was a great shining river, or was it the sea? There were high hills beyond the water, and the sun was setting behind them, and there were purple and gold clouds in the sky, and the clouds looked as if they had tumbled into the water, for that was also purple and gold. There was a river near the town Horace and Lena had been living in, and sometimes Mr. Hall took them for a row, and once they had been to the sea-side—but this was different.

Then they saw a boat quite near them and their Father coming to meet them; all the boxes were put into the boat, and Nurse was helped in and she was so heavy that the boat went all down on one side, and then Mr. Hall lifted Lena in and Horace stepped in after her, and they all packed in somehow among bags and rugs and umbrellas, and Mr. Hall and another man began to row, and the boat went quickly across the water to the hills.

Both Horace and Lena were so sleepy that they did not remember much about their row or the arrival at their new home, which was on the side of a hill among some trees; but when they woke up next morning and were up and dressed, the sun was shining in their faces and sparkling on the water just below them. It was not a river, nor yet the sea—it was just a great sheet of water among the hills called a lake.



Very soon after breakfast Horace and Lena started on a voyage of discovery. They soon ran all over the garden, which was on the side of a hill, with flights of steps leading from one terrace to another, and then at the very top of the garden they came to a wall, and at the farthest end of the wall was a small door nearly hidden by ivy. It was not locked, and they pushed it open with great difficulty as the ivy hung down from the top in long trails and got in the way. When they stepped through the door they found themselves among trees and brooks, and at first they could find no way out.

At last Horace pushed the bushes on one side, and found some steps, covered with moss and rather broken, but he climbed up them, and Lena followed obediently. It was dark under the trees, and she was a little bit frightened, but she always followed Horace, and he climbed up all the steps.

Presently they heard the sound of water rushing quite near them and they came to a stream, tumbling down the hill among black rocks. There was no bridge, but Horace said the flat rocks were “stepping-stones,” and began to cross from one to another.

They were slippery, and he gave Lena a hand, but she nearly tumbled in, for, as she stepped carefully on a flat stone, it moved under her foot and slipped on one side with a splash, and if Horace had not held her up she would have fallen into the water.

Now they were both safely on the other side, and they were sure they would find something! First they had to find a path, so they climbed the hill by the stream that seemed



Buttercups
and
Daisies.



to sing to them; and though the rocks and the stones were grown over with moss and ferns, and it was still dark under the trees, Horace was sure there had once been a path.

So they climbed up and up, till they came to a sort of stile made of upright stones, and when they had climbed over that—what do you think they found? There was a little terrace walk in front of them, and far down below them was the lake sparkling in the sunshine, and at the end of the walk was a summer-house. The children ran along

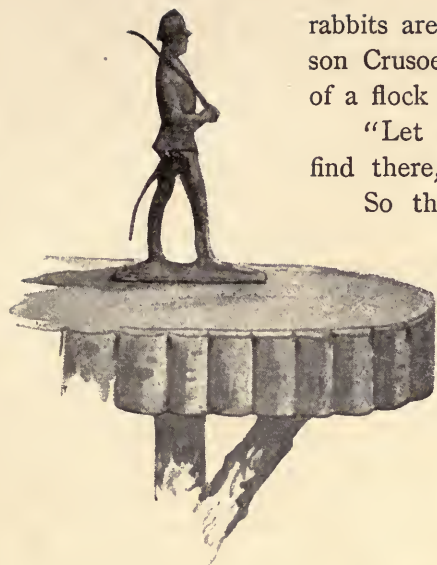




the path, and by the summer-house was a wishing-gate, and when they pushed open the gate they found themselves in a small garden with high banks and great rocks on three sides of it.

The paths were all green, the little lawn was quite overgrown with big yellow buttercups, and the flower-beds were a tangle of weeds and plants, but there was an apple-tree and a rose-bush with pink roses on it, and in the middle of the garden there was a pond, and swimming about in it under the green duckweed were two gold-fish.

As the children came through the gate four fat rabbits scampered off, kicking up their white tails as they disappeared into a hole in the bank at the opposite side. "This is the garden of the Sleeping Beauty," said Lena very softly, "and the



rabbits are her gardeners." But Horace thought it was Robinson Crusoe's garden, and that he kept a flock of rabbits instead of a flock of sheep.

"Let us go into the summer-house and see what we can find there," he said.

So the two explorers opened the door, which creaked as if it had not been opened for a long time, and entered. There in the middle of the summer-house was a table, and on it stood a little Tin Soldier keeping guard, with his sword over his shoulder.

"I expect this belongs to him and he won't like us to touch anything," whispered Lena, but Horace looked all round the place and on a bench in a corner he found a rusty watering-pot and a little iron spade.

"Let us run home and tell Father what we have found," he said at last. The children ran down the hill by the stream and the splashing waterfall, and crossed the slippery stepping-stones and crept under the shrubs down the broken steps and through the door in the wall, and never stopped till they found themselves in their Father's room.

"Well, children, what have you found?" he said. "A desert island or an enchanted palace?"

But Mr. Hall was only joking, and he was very much surprised when he heard of the garden and the summer-house and the little Tin Soldier.

Even he had no idea of the wonderful things to be found round the new home, though he had been there a whole month, and he said the gardener should clear the steps and the path, and Horace and Lena should have the summer-house and the garden for their very own, if they would promise to weed the flower-beds and keep everything tidy.

As for the rabbits, they helped to weed the flower-beds too, only they always nibbled off the flowers by mistake, and they ran away with their little white tails up, in a great hurry, when they saw Horace or Lena.

The buttercups were left just as they were, for as Lena expressed it, she could not bear to have them "tidied up" just like ordinary weeds.



And whenever they went to the garden Lena never failed to bring home a posy for Father.

The Tin Soldier kept guard in the summer-house, with one eye over the lake and one on the terrace path, and Horace said he was the sentry and must not let any one pass without saying, "Who goes there?"

Constance Milman.

Cured in a Minute.

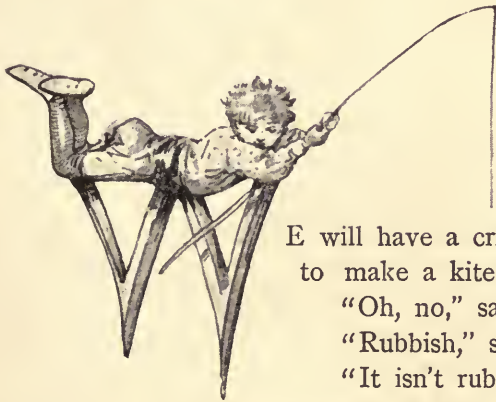


ABY BUNTING tumbled down,
Didn't break her curly crown,
Only scratched her round pink arm—
That was really all the harm.

Sis was sitting down close by,
Just as she began to cry;
Picked up Baby where she fell,
Kissed the place and made it well!

Baby Bunting laughed instead,
Kisses tickle, so she said;
Sis, to quite complete the cure,
Gave three more to make it sure!

"Well, I never!" said the bird,
"That's a fine cure, on my word!"
But most things that seem amiss
Can be mended—with a kiss!



Or,

How We Fished
for the Cow.

“He will have a cricket match this morning, and ask Uncle Roger to make a kite this afternoon,” said Christopher.

“Oh, no,” said Leslie, “make the kite this morning, and—”

“Rubbish,” said Christopher.

“It isn’t rubbish,” said Leslie. “Uncle—”

And then, just as the two brothers were beginning to feel cross, Phyllis came into the room.

“Well?” said both the boys.

“He’s gone out to Mr. Wilson’s,” said Phyllis, in the very dismallest of dismal voices, “and I believe he has gone.”

“No?” said Christopher.

“Well, the fishing-rods are not there,” said Phyllis.

“And it is his last day,” said Leslie.

The three children sighed.

He was the jolliest Uncle that any children ever had. He could spin tops, and make kites and boats, and play cricket. He could do everything. Indeed, in the

children's eyes he would have been absolutely perfect, if he had not had one serious fault—he would go fishing.

"Of course, Mr. Wilson asked him," said Christopher.

"Bother Mr. Wilson," said Leslie.

Then they all walked to the window.

It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining brightly, saying as plainly as he could, "Come out, children, come out."

"Shall we go fishing?" said Phyllis.

"But our fishing is only pretending," said Leslie scornfully, "and we never catch anything."

"Uncle Roger says that doesn't matter," said Phyllis.

Christopher was staring out of the window. Suddenly he took both hands out of his pockets, and clapped them together.

"The new brown cow," he shouted; "the new brown cow!"

Leslie looked at him, puzzled, but Phyllis's eyes began to laugh, and Phyllis said, "Of course, that would be lovely. How shall we do it?"

"A clothes-line, and a walking-stick, and some greenstuff," said Christopher. "Come along."

"I wish I knew what you were talking about," said Leslie.

"We are going to fish for the brown cow," said Phyllis, as they all hurried out of the nursery.

"Oh," said Leslie, "what fun!"

"Now," said Christopher, who always took the lead, "I will get the rope, Phyllis must get a walking-stick, and Leslie some greenstuff, and we will meet on the terrace in two minutes."

Away they ran in different directions, and in less than two minutes Phyllis met Leslie on the terrace at the end of the garden.

The terrace overlooked Mr. Wilson's big field, and the children always pretended that the field was a big pond full of strange fish.

"Where's Christopher?" asked Leslie. "I hope the gardener won't miss this big cabbage."

"There he is," said Phyllis, as Christopher came running down the path, dragging the family clothes-line behind him.

"I had such a bother to get it," he said breathlessly. "Cook, you know. And we must be quick."

The line was fastened to the stick, and the cabbage to the line, and then the line was thrown over the low wall into the field below.

For some time the brown cow took no notice; she was busy munching the grass.

"I wish I could get down into the field," said Leslie; "then I could drive her up to the wall."

"You couldn't get back again," said Christopher. "That horrid man of Mr. Wilson's has made the ditch so deep that our rope-ladder wouldn't be long enough to reach to the bottom now."

"Hush," said Phyllis, "don't talk; and hide behind the wall. She is coming nearer."

The brown cow had at last caught sight of the cabbage.

"Wait until she gets firm hold," said Christopher, "and then pull hard."



They waited a moment, then pulled, and then all three tumbled over.

"I never saw a cow look so astonished," said Phyllis, laughing. "Try again."

The brown cow was tossing her head, and lashing her tail.

"Now, Chris, you hold the line this time, and we will watch," said Leslie.

So Leslie and Phyllis hid, and Christopher, mounting on the wall, threw the cabbage far into the field.

This time the brown cow ran quickly to the cabbage, and seized it in her mouth.

"She's got it—pull, Christopher," said Phyllis.

Leslie was laughing too much to speak.

Christopher pulled, but the cow pulled too, and the cow had seized a piece of the rope in its mouth as well as the cabbage.

"Come and help," said Christopher.

But Leslie and Phyllis were still laughing. There was a cry from Christopher as he lost his balance, and tumbled into the ditch. The brown cow munched away at the cabbage.

"Are you hurt?" said Phyllis.

"Chris, are you hurt?" shouted Leslie.

Christopher picked himself up out of the ditch, and began to brush his clothes.

"How shall we get him out again?" said Phyllis, who quite understood that Christopher did not want to speak for a few minutes.

"If only we had the ladder," said Leslie, "it might be of some use."

"Go and look in the tool-house," said Phyllis; "I think I saw it there."

Leslie ran off up the path.

"Are you all right, Chris?" said Phyllis.

"I can't get back," said Christopher dolefully.

"You'll have to walk to the gate," said Phyllis.

"And meet Mr. Wilson's man," said Christopher. "If only Uncle Roger had not gone."

"If only Leslie would bring the ladder," said Phyllis. "Perhaps he can't find it. I'll see if it is in the back kitchen."

Christopher waited for a few minutes, then he commenced to walk slowly towards the gate.

If he could reach it without being seen, he would be all right, but if he met Mr. Wilson's man——

He was nearly at the gate when he saw that it was open, and that three men were standing beside it.

They were talking busily, and Christopher lay down flat in the ditch, hoping they had not seen him.

He could hear their voices, and as they began walking towards him, he heard Mr. Wilson say——

"Very well then; just for once, you know."

Then he heard a voice he knew very well——

"Thank you very much, Wilson. I'll fetch the youngsters at once, so that we can get a good game. We won't hurt the brown cow."

It was Uncle Roger's voice.

Then he had not gone fishing.

Christopher wished he could sink into the ditch. He waited a minute, then he

jumped up quickly. Uncle Roger was fast disappearing down the road, but Mr. Wilson and the man were close beside the gate.

Christopher buttoned up his jacket, and brushed himself, then he stepped forward, and spoke.

"Good morning, Mr. Wilson," he said; "we were fishing for your brown cow, and I tumbled off the wall into the field. Please, I'm very sorry, but I don't believe the cow minded, because she had a whole cabbage."

"You young vagabond!" began the man, but Mr. Wilson was smiling.

"You must not tease my cows," he said; "and you know you have no business in the field."

"Shall I tell the gentlemen they must not play cricket here to-day," said the man to Mr. Wilson.

"Play cricket! In the field!" said Christopher.

"Yes; be off with you," said Mr. Wilson. "Go and ask your Uncle about it. It is his doing."

"And it is his last day," said Christopher; and with a "Thank you," he was off down the road.

He found Uncle Roger, having rescued Phyllis from Cook, to whom he had restored the clothes-line, endeavouring to soothe the gardener for the loss of his cabbage.

"Well, you are three pickles," said Uncle Roger, when Phyllis and Leslie were at last free to set out for the field. "You all deserve—I don't know what you deserve."

"We thought you had gone fishing," said Phyllis, "and it is your last day."

"So I was the cause of all the mischief," said Uncle Roger, laughing. "Well, you must promise never to tease the cow."

"Or take a cabbage or a clothes-line," said Phyllis. "We won't."

"And we'll have a grand game," said Christopher.

And they did.

Maggie Browne.



Two Little Dicky Birds. ✓

"**D**ICKY dear, do you know that there was another small Dicky in church this morning?"

"Was there?" said little Richard Aylmer, shutting his picture-book and looking up eagerly at his sister. "Had he a sailor suit too?"

Dicky was only four years old, and had been lately promoted from petticoats, so he was very proud of his new clothes.

"No," said Gracie, laughing; "let me see—he had a brown suit and a speckled waistcoat."

"Where did he sit?" asked Dick.

"Well, he went about most of the time; and when he did sit down, it was generally at the top of the pillars."

"Oh, Gracie!" said the little boy, in a tone of shocked amazement. Then he put up his hand. "Stop a little—let me think. Brown coat and speckly waistcoat; oh, I know—it was bird Dick!"

"So it was, you little dear," returned Gracie. She was nine, and therefore quite elderlily compared to her small brother.

"Did he sing? Did he like to be there? Did he keep still while Father was preaching?" asked Dick all in one breath.

"He sang quite loud sometimes," said Gracie, "but he never kept still for long together. And I don't think he liked being there, poor little fellow! He seemed to want to get out, but did not know how."

"But doors was open!"

"Yes, but he never came so low—he flew at the windows. Mother asked Palmer, and he said he didn't see what could be done, birdie was so frightened. He saw him there last night."

"Poor birdie!" said Dicky. "But shouldn't be frightened in God's House, should he, Gracie? No one will hurt him there. But p'raps he doesn't know that."

"And perhaps," said Gracie, "he wants to get home to Mrs. Bird and the little birds. I hope he will get out in the afternoon; he won't be so afraid when there is no one about, I daresay; and you know the doors are left open, and only the gratings shut."

"I hope he will get out," said Dick, rather slowly. "But if he doesn't very much

mind, I wish he would stay till the evening, just for me to see him." And he walked away thoughtfully, his hands in the pockets of his new trousers.

The church at Thornhurst was at some distance from the Rectory, and little Richard only went once on Sundays.

This day, for a great treat, he was to go to the rather early evening service. It could only be held in the summer-time, as many of the people had a long way to come through lonely lanes. He trotted by his Mother's side along the field-path;

his two elder sisters had gone on in front.

"I must stay for the choir practice this evening," said Mother. "Would you like to stay too, Dicky, or will you go home with the girls? You can do just as you choose."

Dicky reflected. This was a very important point, and required consideration.

"Think I would like to stay for you, Mother," he said at last.

"Well, you need not decide now. Go with Mabel and Gracie if you please."

The little dicky bird was not to be seen, and Richard was obliged to conclude that it had got away.

He said to himself that he was glad, but he said it with a sigh.

But no sooner did the singing begin than he heard the bird's clear note so close to him that he started and looked up.

There it was, perched above his head out of reach, but so near that the two pairs of bright eyes could look into each other. And there it remained through the



whole of the service. It was tired out, poor thing, with continually flying backwards and forwards, in the vain hope of finding its way home once more.

But Dicky Aylmer was quite sure that it was on his account that the bird remained there. Whether it guessed that he was Dicky too, or whether it was attracted by the red collar and cuffs on his white suit, he could not tell.

So when the service came to an end at last, Dicky Aylmer got up and went out of church after his sisters, quite convinced that the bird would follow him out, and thus would get over its difficulties.

"Wait a minute," he said, as they left the porch; "Birdie's coming."

So they waited, but in vain.

"I s'pose it losed me in the crowd," said Dicky at last, "'cause it kept quite near to me before."

"It is not coming now," said Mabel, who was very much inclined to laugh, only that she saw it was a serious matter with her brother.

"You go home, girls," he said, in his most patronising tone. "I'll go back and wait for Mother. It'll come then, when there's not so many people."

So he went into church again very quietly, and up to his usual place. The bird was there no longer, but, after looking for a little, he spied it above the stalls. As gently as possible he crept into one of them, and seated himself on a hassock. The choir were all standing outside.

There he sat and watched the bird and listened to the singing. Then he grew a little tired and laid his head on the seat. And there he went to sleep, and slept so soundly that he did not notice when the organist ceased playing and everyone went away.



Mrs. Aylmer was rather tired, too, so instead of taking her usual stroll around the garden, she went into the drawing-room and sat down.

Twilight begins early when August is drawing to a close, and it was getting dusk when a knock came at the door and Nurse put her head in.

"Master Dicky, ma'am. Hadn't he better go to bed?"

"Certainly, Nurse; I was wondering why he had not come to say good-night."

"I thought he was with you, ma'am," said Nurse, in a puzzled tone.

"Oh, no, I stayed for the practice, and he went home with his sisters."

Nurse withdrew her head rather abruptly, and disappeared. Very shortly afterwards she returned, preceded, however, by Mabel and Gracie very excited, running at the top of their speed.

"Oh, Mother!" they exclaimed both together, "Dicky did not come home with us."

"Not with you! why, I saw him go out," said Mrs. Aylmer, starting up.

"Yes, but he went back, because he thought the bird would follow him when there were fewer people," said Mabel.

"He must have been locked in," sobbed Gracie.

Mrs. Aylmer was out of the door before they had finished speaking, the girls by her side, and Nurse following with uncovered head.

Never had they gone so quickly down the church path before; yet it seemed hours to Mrs. Aylmer until they reached the door and turned the great key in the lock.

It was almost dark inside, and before her eyes could distinguish anything, her ears heard the welcome pattering of little feet, and Dicky was in her arms.



She carried him into the porch, and hugged and kissed him.

"Oh, my darling! my darling!" she said, "where were you?"

And Dicky replied, in his simple way—

"I only waked up a little time, Mother; and I tried not to be frightened, 'cause I knowed God would take care of me in His own House. And Birdie singed to me. I don't know if it was a hymn, but I don't think God would mind. Oh, look, Mother!"

And Dicky pointed to the porch.

The light outside was still vivid compared with the darkness within, so that the open door left a clear white space, through which the bird had just darted.

"I'm glad he'll get home too!" said Dicky. "No, Nurse; I don't want to be carried—I'm a big boy."

They went a good deal more slowly back than they had gone down, and not one of the party is likely to forget that summer Sunday when the two Dicks were shut up in church together.

Mrs. Isla Sitwell.

The Dream.



✓
HAT is the matter, Dolly dear?
Oh, don't be frightened—Sister's here.
It isn't dark now any more—
There's sunlight on the nursery floor.
Don't cry! Oh, Dolly dear, don't cry,
Or if you must cry—tell me why?"

Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!
I am so glad the morning's here;
For I've been dreaming all night long
That all my lessons had gone wrong:
I dreamed I'd seventy sums to do—
And I'd forgotten two times two.

E. N.



"Don't Cry."



Rosy. ✓

ROSY as an apple,
Round and red is she;
Such a darling never
Grew upon a tree!

Put her in the basket,
Take her to the town—
She will sell in market
For a silver crown!

“No, no, no!” said Rosy—
Little three-year-old:
“Mother wouldn’t sell me,
Not for crowns of gold!”

That Half-Sovereign. ✓

JENNIE and Baby Reginald had been as usual on the Parade ground, and very pleasant it was to feel the fresh wind blowing over the open downs, and very amusing to see the country recruits put through their exercises. Much nicer, even now in winter, than London, where they had been quartered some time; and in spring when the flowers came, it would be glorious.

But Baby must go in for his sleep, so Jennie bundled him into the “pram” and trundled it off, but when nearly home someone called her. It was Mrs. Brown; who stood at her door with her head wrapped in a shawl.

“I’m nigh silly with the toothache,” she said. “I haven’t slept all night. Will you go to the chemist’s and fetch me some stuff, Jennie, for Joe’s away and I have no one to send?”

“Oh, yes,” said Jennie. “I’ll just take Baby in and be back directly.”

“The shop is by the Town Hall,” said Mrs. Brown when Jennie returned. “Name of Tucker, and the stuff is called toothache cure. It’s sixpence. I’ve only got half a sovereign and that’s really Mrs. Gladwish’s, for she lent me nine shillings when Johnnie was ill, so you’ll bring me the change safe, dear. They are nasty flittersome things is half-sovereigns. You’ll keep it safe, dear, won’t you; and it’ll be nine and sixpence change.”

"I'll take care," said Jennie earnestly, and ran off with the "flittersome" coin tightly grasped in her hand.

The Barracks were outside the town, but it wasn't far down the street to the Town Hall, and there close by, Jennie's quick eyes soon saw the chemist's shop, with "Tucker" in big golden letters over it.

There were no customers there when she entered, nor was Mr. Tucker himself present, but a thin, pale, red-haired boy looked over the counter at her.

"What do you want?" he said grumpily.

"Please I want a bottle of toothache cure," answered Jennie.

The youth picked up a small packet from the counter and gave it her.

"It's sixpence," he said.

"Yes, I know," replied Jennie, handing him the half-sovereign.

He took it and apparently put it into the till. Jennie heard the little ting and waited for her change, but the boy sat down and began labelling some bottles. — — —

Jennie grew impatient.

"Please will you give me the change?" she said at last.

"Change!" said the boy, looking up. "What change? I told you the stuff was sixpence. There ain't any change."

"Oh! but please there is," cried Jennie, consternated. "I gave you half a sovereign!"

"Half a sovereign!" exclaimed the boy, glaring at her. "It was a sixpence—there isn't any change out of that!"

"But it *wasn't* a sixpence," cried Jenny, trembling. "It wasn't indeed! It was half a sovereign, and Mrs. Brown said I must have nine and sixpence change," and Jennie burst into tears.

"What's the matter, Burgess?" said another voice, and Mr. Tucker himself stepped from the back parlour. "What is wrong?"

"Please, sir," said the lad, "this little girl has just bought some toothache cure, and gave me sixpence, and now she says it was a half-sovereign and wants nine and sixpence change. Will you please look in the till, sir, and see if I made a mistake?"

Mr. Tucker unlocked the till. There was no half-sovereign among the coins, but there was a sixpence. "You must have made a mistake, my dear," he said. "You had better run home, and you'll see Mother will say it was a sixpence."

"But it wasn't—Mother!" sobbed Jennie. "It was—Mrs. Brown, and she—said it was a half-sovereign—and she wanted to pay——"

"Oh! come, come, come," interrupted Mr. Tucker, who had experience in statements of this kind. "There, there—run away home! I can't have this row in the shop, or—or I shall have to send for the police."



Mr. Tucker had no intention of carrying out his threat, but the words were enough. Jennie stared at him aghast, and then turned and fled, never stopping till she flung herself into her Mother's arms, and sobbed out the whole dreadful story.

Of course they had to go and tell poor Mrs. Brown, who went paler than even the toothache had made her, when she heard of the disaster.

"The boy must have took it himself," she said. "But of course they won't believe you against him. Don't cry so, dearie," she went on. "I must try and get Mrs. Gladwish to wait a bit. It ain't your fault, you poor little soul."

But Jennie couldn't let Mrs. Brown lose her money. As she went home with her Mother a great resolve filled her soul. She would go and ask Mrs. Houldsworth, the Captain's wife, to lend her the money, and let her pay by degrees.

"For I often earn sixpence or ninepence a week going errands and minding babies," said Jennie to the lady, who had kindly come out to speak to her, "and I will pay you back honest, ma'am, that I will!"

"Mother," said Mabel Houldsworth, who was with her mother, and had listened to Jennie's recital with deep interest, "I've ten shillings Uncle Jack gave me. Please, may I give it to Jennie?"

"You shall *lend* it her, dear," said Mrs. Houldsworth, "for I think Jennie will like that best."

And Jennie looked up with such bright eyes of pleasure at being understood, that the Captain's wife stooped and kissed her.

So it was settled, and every week Jennie brought her sixpence to Mabel to pay off her debt.

* * * * *

It was summer-time—the world was full of flowers. One evening Jennie wheeled Baby Reginald out to the fields, and there let him toddle about, while she sat down to make a daisy chain. She was singing in her high, sweet, childish voice—

“Butter-cups and dai—sies,
Oh! the pret-ty flow-ers—”

when suddenly a shadow fell on the grass beside her, and there stood the red-haired chemist's boy, looking very sheepish, holding out his hand. She sprang to her feet, the daisies falling out of her lap, and stared at him in amazement.

“I've brought it back, please,” he mumbled. “I'm very sorry I took it, but I was nearly drove wild. Please, here it is!” and he pushed half a sovereign into Jennie's palm.

“The half-sovereign!” she gasped. “Mrs. Brown's half-sovereign.”

“Yes,” went on the lad, looking down. “I'm very sorry, but mother was ill and if we hadn't paid the rent they would have turned her into the street. And when you gave me the money, the thought took me, and I put sixpence into the till and kept the half-sovereign. I'm very sorry. I'll never do it again, no—not if I starve first. I didn't mind starving then—but there was mother—but she's dead, and it don't matter—nothing matters now! I beg your pardon, and I'm very sorry, and I hope you'll forgive me some

day.” The lad turned to go, but Jennie caught his sleeve.

“Please stop,” she said. “I—I—don't understand—this money.”

“It is honest money,” said the lad eagerly. “I have saved it from my wages.



I was going to send it by post, but Parson said—for I told him, —'twould be more manlike to bring it and ask your pardon. So when I see you alone with the kid, I thought I'd speak. But if you could see your way not to tell Mr. Tucker—"

"I won't tell nobody but Mother!" interrupted Jennie, "and—I'm so sorry your mother is dead!"

"I'm not—I'm glad!" answered the lad.

"Glad!" echoed Jennie, horrified.

"Yes," he answered. "Parson says there ain't no pain or sorrow up there"—he jerked his head towards the sky—"but she had lots here. It doesn't matter about me if *she* is all right! But I'm very much obliged to you for being so kind about it, and—and—I'll never do it again. Good-bye." And the lad again turned to go. But Jennie was not going to let him go away like that.

"Please come and see Mother," she said. "I'm sure she will want to see you—and—she's so nice—you'll like her!"

The boy gave a queer kind of laugh as he looked at Jennie.

"I b'lieve it's true what Parson says about the angels!" he said, in a choky voice. "Yes, dear, I'll come—some day!"

And so he did one evening after dark, with a great bunch of cowslips he had walked a long way to gather for Jennie, and after that Willy Burgess spent more evenings up at the Barracks than anywhere else.



M. A. Hoyer.

Neptune, the Dog of the Beach.



NEPTUNE lived on the beach, and he had no home in particular, though there were at least fifty houses where he was always welcome. He was a very independent fellow, but he had many friends; for everybody at Beachover liked him, and had a pleasant word for

the big, shaggy, brown dog, who was so interested in everything, and so very busy, though—so far as anybody could see—he had really nothing whatever to do.

He had no master, and nobody knew where he came from, but, as he was himself quite as ignorant as the rest of the world, this did not trouble him at all. There he was, and that was all about it; and no dog in England was happier, or—in his own opinion—more full of business. He was busy from morning to night attending to everybody's affairs but his own. Not a boat could be launched without his assistance; not a child have its first lesson in paddling unless he were there to run into the sea beside it, and bark encouragement. Now, there were many boats drawn up on the shingle at Beachover, and crowds of children always arriving from hot, dusty inland homes, where there was no sea to paddle in; so that Neptune often knew he was wanted in half a dozen places at once, and did his best to be in all of them, too; for he was a conscientious dog, and hated to disappoint anybody.

And then there were the people who were always throwing things into the sea, in order that other—four-footed—people might fetch them out again. Neptune privately thought this rather silly on their part; but he was quite ready to humour them; and he loved the rapid plunge into the water, and the excitement of seizing the stick—or whatever it might be—and carrying it back in triumph. Perhaps, after all, they threw it in so often out of pure good nature, just to amuse him! People were odd sometimes, and it was quite impossible for a busy dog, who had plenty of other things to think about, to understand all their whims and fancies.

Children generally loved Neptune, for he was very gentle with them, and let them roll him over and pull him about just as they pleased. It was, therefore, the more remarkable that Mary and Maggie and Johnny should be afraid of him, and scream and shrink back if he so much as looked in their direction. He couldn't understand it at all; he had always done his best for these disagreeable children, and

A Day
at the Seaside.



the very first day he observed them on the beach—just pinned up, ready to paddle—he had hurried up to say how glad he was to see them, and could he be of any use?

“Go away, naughty dog,” Mary cried. “Oh! oh! he’ll bite!” wailed Johnny.

Maggie said nothing; but she ran a little way off, and then turned and threw a pebble at him. It was a large pebble, and she threw it as hard as ever she could.

It did not hit him, but Neptune was very much hurt for all that: he slunk away, looking so sad and crestfallen that to see him you would have thought he was the person in fault, and not Maggie.

But he bore no malice, and would gladly have gone into the sea with Johnny, who, being a very little fellow, was afraid of the waves, and wanted a great deal of encouragement. But when he barked, the boy screamed; and when he ran up to see what all the noise was about, Nurse ordered him back so sternly that he thought he had better go at once, though he knew perfectly well he had done nothing to deserve such treatment. Neptune had never been so unhappy in his life before, and for a day or two he hardly made a new acquaintance on the beach, so afraid was he of again finding himself repulsed.

Now, little Johnny was still rather afraid of the water; but Nurse had dropped asleep, and as his sisters were too intent on their own affairs to attend to him, he crept out along the breakwater to fill his pail. The wood was so slimy that it was with difficulty he kept his footing; still he managed to get some distance out, and the water was deep on either side of him, when suddenly he slipped, and fell headlong into the sea. The children’s shrieks woke Nurse with a start, but

there were few people near the spot, and the tide was running strong. What was to be done?

Oh, for a boat! for someone——

Then, all at once, a shaggy, brown dog tore down the shingle, and plunged into the water. Neptune had rushed to the rescue, and after a few breathless moments, little Johnny was safe on the shore. Oh, what

a fuss they made about Neptune then! and how pleased the good dog was to find himself no longer repulsed! They gave him a

splendid collar, with his name on it, and the date on which he saved Johnny; and when next you are at Beachover, and see it, you will think of this story of Neptune, the dog of the beach, and know how true it all is.

Evelyn Fletcher.



Doing Nothing.



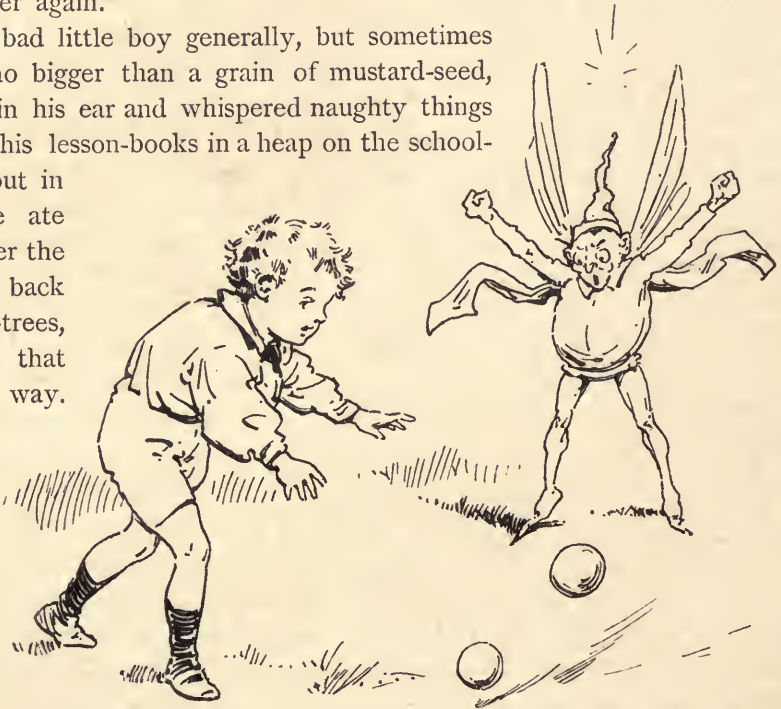
TOMMY would not learn his lessons. He wouldn't do his sums, he upset the ink over his geography book, and smashed his slate. He tore a leaf out of his grammar and made a paper

boat of it. He ought to have been punished, but he wasn't, because his Mamma thought that dear Tommy must be ill or he wouldn't behave so badly;

so, thinking the fresh air would be good for him, she asked him to pick her a bunch of buttercups out of the meadow, but Tommy said he would rather not—he didn't want to do anything ever again.

Tommy was not a bad little boy generally, but sometimes the idle fairy, who is no bigger than a grain of mustard-seed, though very strong, sat in his ear and whispered naughty things to him. He threw all his lesson-books in a heap on the school-room floor, and went out in the orchard, where he ate seven big apples one after the other, and lay on his back looking up at the apple-trees, and trying to feel glad that he had had his own way. Presently he sighed.

"What do you want?" said a voice, and Tommy saw a little red-cheeked man in a green cap, swinging on one of the apple boughs and looking at him.



"I only want to do nothing," whined Tommy; "it's very hard they won't let me."

"Oh, if that's all," said the little man, "come with me," and taking Tommy's hand, he led him through a convenient little door which opened in the trunk of the apple-tree. It led straight into the most beautiful garden in the world.

"Now then," said the little man, "do nothing as hard as you like." And he plumped Tommy down on a grassy bank.

Presently a troop of merry children came by, with balls and hoops. Tommy jumped up to catch a golden ball that rolled his way.

"Lie down, sir," said the little man, for all the world as though he had been a dog, Tommy thought; "you wanted to do nothing, remember!"

"I meant no lessons," said Tommy.

"You didn't say so," said the little man.

"Besides, all those children have done their lessons, or else they would not be allowed to stay here."

Some more children came by riding on white ponies. One pony had no rider. Tommy started up. It would be lovely to ride that long-tailed pretty little pony.

"Lie down, sir," said the Apple-Man crossly; "you came here to do nothing and I'm going to see that you do it."

"I am doing something anyhow," said Tommy suddenly. "I'm sitting down."

"All right," said the Apple-man; "we'll soon settle that"; and a strong hook suddenly caught Tommy by the back of his clothes and hung him up in the air.

"Now you are not doing anything, anyway," said the little man; "the hook is doing the work."

Imagine being hung up by a hook just out of reach of everything, while long processions of little green men came and offered you all the things you wanted most in the world—cricket-bats and ferrets, paint-boxes and hard-bake, guinea-pigs, catapults, and white mice, marbles, buns, and sheaves of letters with valuable foreign stamps on them. Tommy cried with rage, but the little Apple-Man only laughed and kept saying—



"How do you like doing nothing, eh!—jolly, isn't it?"

Then he saw his Mother coming along the path, and to his horror he saw that a leopard was slinking after her. He called aloud, but she did not hear.

"Oh, let me go and drive the leopard away," he cried to the little green man; "it will eat my Mammy—I know it will. Oh, Mammy, Mammy!" but she did not hear, and the little man said, "Oh, nonsense! if you haven't got the pluck to master a simple addition sum, you can't master a leopard, you know"; but Tommy struggled so hard that the hook gave way and he fell with a bounce on the orchard grass. He rushed off to find his Mother. To his delight she was safe, and there was no leopard about in the house or garden. He threw his arms round her neck. "Mammy," he said, "I do love you so. I'll learn everything and do everything you tell me."

"Ah!" thought his Mother, "the fresh air has done him good."

But it was not the fresh air; it was the little Apple-Man.

E. N.



Peep Bo. ✓

PEEP bo, peep bo!"
Calls out laughing little Flo,
First on left and then on right,
In a twinkling out of sight.

Like a flash of lightning, she
Flits from place to place, you see—
And her voice you only hear
Calling "Peep bo!" far and near.

Oh, it is "such jolly fun"
Getting darling Dad "to run"—
Here and there and all around
While she's nowhere to be found.

"Peep bo, peep bo!"—
With a little fairy Flo.
How are you to guess, oh dear!
Whether she's far off or near?

M. Hedderwick Browne.

Marjory and the Mice. ✓

"Marjory Daw, Marjory Daw,
Cried when the mouse in the bucket she saw."

*T*HUS sang teasing Tommy, as he swayed himself backwards and forwards on the arm of the old arm-chair in the nursery. Poor little Marjory! It was quite true: she *had* cried because Nurse would drown the mouse who had been so foolish as to venture into the trap set for him. Marjory loved the dear little mice, with their bright black eyes, and often fed them when Nurse was not near to scold. One night she hid a piece of cake at tea-time, and after she had been put to bed and left alone, scattered the crumbs upon the floor, and whispered softly, "Come, dear micey mousies, I've a treat for you to-night."

In a short time the mice came out, but Marjory noticed that her favourite was missing. This particular mouse was a very big fat fellow, and because he was so much bigger and fatter than the other mice, Marjory had named him "Uncle Adam" after her great-uncle Adam, who was very big and stout.

She was sorry he should miss the treat of the cake, but it couldn't be helped, and so she turned over in bed, and went to sleep.

When she awoke in the morning she heard Nurse in the next room telling Tommy she had caught a mouse. Marjory was very excited, and wondered whether she would be allowed to have the mouse to play with. So she tumbled out of bed, and ran just as she was into the nursery. "Oh, Nursie," she said, "have you really caught a dear little mouse? May I see him?"

"Yes, Miss Marjory, I have, and he'll soon be wishing he wasn't caught. When I've given you your breakfast I'll put him in the bucket and drown him!"



"Oh, no, Nursie, dear Nursie, please don't."

Just at that moment enterprising Tommy discovered the mousetrap and set it on the table.

"Oh," shrieked Marjory, "it's Uncle Adam—it's dear Uncle Adam! Oh, don't drown him—please don't!"

"Why," said Nurse, "what on earth do you mean by Uncle Adam in the mouse-trap?"

Marjory was too much distressed to explain, and could only sob, and beg to have Uncle Adam released. But Nurse was deaf to all her entreaties and, to end the matter there and then, popped the mouse, trap and all, into the bucket and carried it away downstairs.

Marjory wept all the time she was being dressed, and would eat no breakfast, so grieved was she at the fate of poor Uncle Adam. And now just as she was beginning to recover a little, that naughty Tommy must needs begin to tease her.

"You wicked, cruel boy," she said. "I don't love you at all, and I wish you were put in the bucket instead of my poor Uncle Adam." As Tommy only laughed and teased all the more, she flew into a violent temper and stamped her foot with rage.

"Oh! oh! oh! you—you horrid boy! I'll run away and never speak to you again—I will," and off she tore out of the nursery as hard as she could run.

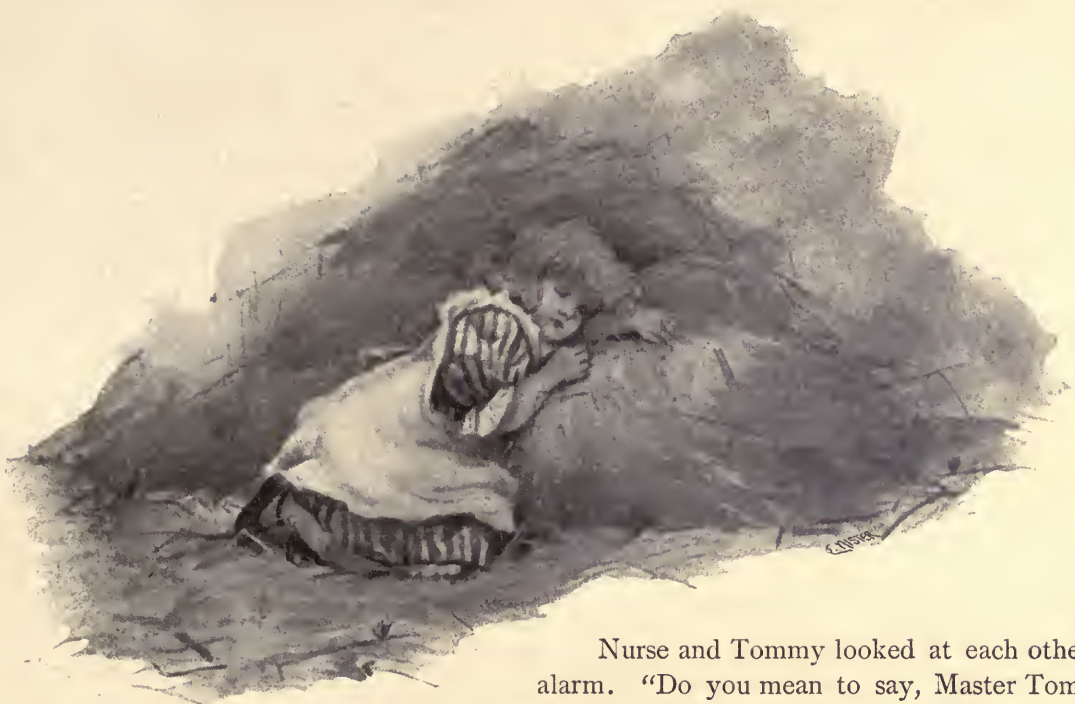
Now Tommy did feel a little uncomfortable, for he was very fond of his little sister, and he knew he must have teased her most unmercifully for gentle little Marjory to grow so angry. Still, *he* wasn't going to make friends, so he whistled "Tommy Dodd" very much out of tune, and began to play with his soldiers.

Nurse was busy that morning, and after a time the nursery bell rang. Tommy knew that meant Mother was ready to hear him his lessons, so he gathered up his books and went down with rather a doleful air. He was thinking so much about Marjory that he really could not attend to his lessons, and so Mother was angry and made him stay in the room with her all the morning, re-writing his exercises. When he had finished it was nearly dinner-time, and so Mother said, "Marjory must bring her book after dinner, Tommy—I have no time to teach her now. How was it she did not come down to see me this morning?"

"She was crying all about a dead mouse," said Tommy, "and then I think she went to Nurse when I came to you."

Tommy said this in all good faith, for he never dreamt that Marjory would really run away. When he went up to Nurse to be tidied for dinner he quite expected to see Marjory waiting to kiss and be friends, but there was no one in the nursery except Nurse. "Where's Marjory?" she said at once.

"Why, I thought she was with you, Nurse," replied the boy.



Nurse and Tommy looked at each other in alarm. "Do you mean to say, Master Tommy, that she hasn't been with you all the morning?"

"Well," said Tom reluctantly, "she was here with me until just before Mother rang, and then she ran out of the room, and I thought she was with you. Perhaps she went to Cook," he added, brightening, for Marjory was a great favourite of Cook's.

Tommy tore down to the kitchen, nearly upsetting Mary, who was carrying the vegetables into the dining-room. "Cook," he shouted, "have you got Marjory?"

"Lor' bless me, no, Master Tommy—why?"

"Because," gasped Tommy, "she's lost."

"Lost!" shrieked Cook, and back came Mary to see what was the matter.

It was quite true—Marjory was lost, and soon poor, wretched Tommy had confessed all he knew, not sparing himself in the least, and having finished, he leaned his head against his Mother's knee and cried aloud in his misery.

But what had become of Marjory all this time? When she rushed out of the nursery she fully meant to run away and never speak to bad, wicked Tommy any more. She had no idea where she should go to, but she ran downstairs and out through the garden, away to the fields beyond. She ran and ran without stopping, until her little legs were so tired that she could go no farther. "Now," said she to herself, "I have run quite a hundred miles, so I will sit down and think for awhile."

Accordingly she sat down at the foot of a haycock and the first thing she thought

of was her breakfast, which she had not eaten. She wished she had that breakfast now, but it was no use wishing, and so, as her head ached with the sun, she thought she would lie down a little while, to rest her head and be the better able to think.

After a while she forgot how tired and hungry she was, for she saw, to her great delight, a dear tiny mouse push its little head up through the hay and look at her inquiringly. It was very much smaller than any of Marjory's other mice-friends, but otherwise it did not differ much in appearance.

Marjory watched it for a time and then said softly, "Don't be afraid, Mrs. Mousey, I'm Marjory."

"Oh, indeed;" replied the mouse, "then I've heard of you frequently from some friends of mine who live in a house near here. They have told me what lovely feasts you give them, and I am delighted to make your acquaintance."

Then Marjory told Mrs. Field (this was the name of the mouse) all about the sad death of poor Uncle Adam, and how she ran away. Mrs. Field listened attentively and was much affected, but when Marjory wound up her narrative by saying, "And now, Mrs. Field, I do want my dinner," she was rather perplexed.

"You see, you are such a big person to provide for," she said, "and I don't suppose you would care to become a mouse, eh?"

"Oh, I should love to be a mouse," said Marjory, "but it isn't possible, is it?"

"Nothing in the world easier," replied Mrs. Field. "You have only to say—

"Jimmery, jammery, jockery, jock,
Fly away boots and fly away frock.
Smishery, smashery, smoshery, schmouse,
Turn me into a little brown mouse—

and you will find the thing is done."

Marjory repeated the words of the spell, and had hardly finished before her body began to shrink up, her clothes fell away, and she began to run about on all fours. "Now," said the mouse, "I will take you to my nest and give you some food."

The nest was close by, and Marjory was at once introduced to Mrs. Field's three babies—such funny wee pink things, that might have slept comfortably in Mother's thimble. When she had admired them sufficiently, Mrs. Field brought her her dinner, which consisted of three grains of corn and a piece of crust.

After dinner her new friend suggested that they should go and pay a visit of condolence to the bereaved relations of poor Uncle Adam. Marjory eagerly consented, and the two started off together. They soon reached the house. Mrs. Field led her to a hole in the pantry and disappeared, Marjory followed, and soon found herself in the home of the mice. The spectacle which presented itself was a melancholy one. Eight or nine mice were sitting in a ring on the floor, each with his pocket-hand-

kerchief to his eyes and his tail tied up with crape. Mrs. Field explained the object of their visit, and the mice all bowed solemnly.

"And how does poor Mrs. Adam bear her loss?" said Marjory.

"Alas! she lies curled up in her nest and will neither eat nor drink."

Marjory glanced in the direction of a ball of rags and paper from which she could see the tip of Mrs. Adam's tail protruding.

Now, the mention of food and drink had suggested to the afflicted family the necessity of offering their visitors some refreshment, so they laid the cloth and spread upon it a sumptuous repast, consisting of scraps of bread and cheese and a candle-end. Considering all things, the hosts managed to make a fairly good meal; in fact, they gobbled so fast that Marjory could not keep up with them, and merely got a wee



scrap as her share. When everything was eaten the mice all licked their paws quite clean, and then sat down again to weep. Marjory was very sorry for them, but after a time she became rather tired of listening to sniffs and sobs, so she thought she would go and see what Tommy was doing and if he were sorry for having teased her; so, whispering to Mrs. Field that she would soon be back, she scampered off, crept through a hole, and was soon in the nursery. But the nursery was empty, and Marjory was scampering off again when a lovely odour assailed her nose. She stopped, and, peeping into the cupboard, saw the mouse-trap in which the unfortunate Uncle Adam had been caught. A beautiful piece of cheese was hanging temptingly inside, and Marjory looked at it and longed. "I think Uncle Adam must have been a little clumsy," said she, "to be caught so easily. I'm quite sure *I* could take that piece of cheese without being caught; I'll just try." So she crept cautiously into the trap, but no sooner

had her little nose touched the cheese than down went the trap with a bang, and she was caught. Here was a fine plight to be in! Presently Nurse would come and take her away and drown her, and she would never be able to make her understand that it was Marjory who was being dropped into the bucket. At the thought of her terrible fate if she could not succeed in freeing herself from the trap, Marjory made one violent effort, and behold!—the sides of the trap gave way, and Marjory sat up, rubbing her eyes, and pushing away the hay that had tumbled all over her.

Just then she heard Tommy's voice cry out, "There she is! there she is!" and the next moment he was kneeling by her side, hugging and kissing her. Up came Mother, and then came Nurse, and Cook also appeared in sight. How pleased everyone was that she was found! Marjory began to feel a little ashamed of herself for having run away from all these kind people, but after awhile she said, "Oh, Mother, I'm so hungry, I do want my dinner; for you know the mouse only gave me three grains of corn and a piece of crust, and I didn't have much to eat at Mrs. Uncle Adam's."

Everyone tried hard not to laugh, and on the way home Marjory told them all about her adventures in Mouseland. "Wasn't it a good thing I broke the trap, Nurse," she said.

"And what a very good thing you happened to be caught in the trap," said Mother, "or you might have chosen to remain a mouse; and what should I have done without my little girl?"

After Marjory was in bed that night, Tommy went to his Mother and asked how much money he had in his money-box. Mother looked in the box, and then announced "Twopence-halfpenny, Tommy."

"Do you think if I saved up until Christmas I should have enough to buy—" Here he whispered something in Mother's ear. "Yes," she said, "I think you would."

Of course I don't know what Tommy whispered in his Mother's ear, but I do know that when Christmas Day came at last, Marjory was awakened by Tommy very early in the morning to receive his present, and you can imagine her delight when it proved to be a pretty wooden cage containing two dear little white mice. Marjory could not speak for pleasure, but she put her arms round Tommy's neck and gave him a good hug, and I believe Tommy was almost as pleased as Marjory herself.

When the postman came that morning he brought a large square parcel for Marjory. It was a beautiful book, and on the first page was written:—

*"To the little girl who cried because Uncle Adam was drowned. From her friends,
THE HOUSE MICE."*

"How kind of Uncle Adam!" said Mother.

"But it isn't from Uncle Adam," said Marjory; "it's from my mice. How nice of them to remember me!"

L. L. Weedon.

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